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EDITORIAL

THERE SHE GOES, MISS AMERICA

Family values have claimed another victim in Vanessa Williams. Her exposure could not have come at a worse time, after the four days of self-righteousness in San Francisco and a veritable onslaught of political attacks against naughtiness and unpatriotism. "If you break the law," Geraldine Ferraro told the convention, "you must pay for your crime." Under such an inflexible ethos, apologies by definition are hardly worth the videotape they're recorded on. For Williams, the wages of sin is a giveback.

Williams's tough luck was to be locked in a series of devastating double binds, more secure than most jails. The first demands that beauty queens be both mother and whore, sexless and seductive. The exhibition of women's bodies is controlled by men, and the public is invited to look and lust. The fun (for the men) is in the chase; the fox on the runway must never be caught, or caught in the act. Ironically, that same quaint morality now governs the appearances of Geraldine Ferraro, who is forbidden to touch her running mate lest Judeo-Christian morality, so much in the news these days, be offended.

A worse bind is imposed by the taboo against homosexuality: Williams's partner in pornography was a woman. Then there is the sticky subject of race. This first black Miss America was told by the white world of *People* and *Entertainment Tonight* to emulate Jackie Robinson, not Josephine Baker.

The new morality, also called the new realism when it is invoked to suppress political demands, is hypocritical and unjust. An honest society struggling to eradicate its sexism would excoriate the pornographer and exonerate his victim. And it would laugh the Miss America pageant right off the boardwalk.

POLISH AMNESTY
Daniel Singer

GETTING THE GRANT
Calvin Trillin

THE EPIC CAMPAIGN
Greg Mitchell

UNKINDLY PAYMENTS
Theresa Braine

'TIRANT LO BLANC'
Maureen Quilligan

SKVORECKY'S SOULS
Michael Henry Heim

THE U.S. IN HONDURAS

MYSTERIOUS DEATH OF FR. CARNEY

GEORGE BLACK AND ANNE NELSON

Last September 19 the Honduran armed forces staged an elaborate press conference in Nueva Palestina, a ramshackle jungle settlement in Olancho province, just thirty miles from the Nicaraguan border, to announce that its counter-insurgency forces had liquidated a ninety-six-strong guerrilla column. Killed at the head of the column the previous evening, according to Maj. Leonel Luque, commander of the army's task force, was José María Reyes Mata, Honduras's most celebrated Marxist. Reyes Mata's killing, which broke the back of the guerrilla resistance, brought the total of dead subversives to thirty-eight. Not all had died in battle; ten were said to have starved in the jungle after military intelligence detected them and the army cut off their food supply. Among the latter was a 58-year-old American Jesuit from St. Louis, the Rev. James Francis (Guadalupe) Carney. Laid out for the press to inspect, next to a formidable array of RPG-2 grenade launchers and M-60 heavy machine guns, were Carney's religious vestments, a wooden chalice and a Bible. The Honduran Army also produced three emaciated "deserters" to fill in the details of the by-now familiar Sandinista conspiracy.

The foreign journalists, shuttled into Nueva Palestina aboard army helicopters, were skeptical. For several weeks, armed forces commander Gen. Gustavo Alvarez Martínez had insisted on the existence of a Cuban-Nicaraguan conspiracy to infiltrate his country with 3,000 armed terrorists, but the few journalists who nosed around in Olancho found no evidence of a guer-

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LETTERS.

A DEVILISH EXCISION

New York City

In his critique of the dialogue between Irving Howe and me in *The New York Times Magazine*, Alexander Cockburn speculates that something may have been cut in the section where I seemed to be saying that the only reason I was against U.S. intervention in Central America was that it was against the national security interests of the United States, a sentiment which Cockburn then interpreted as meaning that I was concerned for the national security interests of U.S. imperialism ["Beat the Devil," *The Nation*, July 7-14].

Indeed somewhere between 1,500 and 2,000 words were cut at the last minute. I wrongly agreed to the excision because I didn't realize how it would open up my meaning to an ungenerous reading. I am against American intervention on principled moral and political grounds. Period. I do not think that "U.S. imperialism" represents the genuine national security interests of the United States, and I want to oppose that imperialism on precisely those grounds. I believe that the anti-interventionist movement represents real national security as well as real internationalism. I don't fault Cockburn for not knowing about my editorial stupidity; I do wish that the spirit of *Schadenfreude* were not so vibrant on the left.

Irving Howe is out of the country. I will only note that an article in which he acknowledges his own debt to the New Left is hardly the exercise in cold war sectarianism that Cockburn makes it out to be.

Finally, a word of self-criticism. I wish we had made it clear that we were focusing primarily on a left economic program, not on socialist vision or social issues, both of which are of enormous importance to us.

Michael Harrington, Co-Chair
Democratic Socialists of America

REHABILITATING NIXON

Columbia, S.C.

Thanks very much for Robert Sherrill's review of Robert Sam Anson's book on Richard Nixon ["There Was a Crooked Man," *The Nation*, July 7-14]. Sherrill performs a public service, at great personal sacrifice, by wading through such writing for us. His theory that the establishment takes care of its own makes sense, but I suspect something else is going on. Nixon is being brought back into fashion because in foreign policy he is moderate compared with Reagan. Reagan's bellicosity has scared even those on the moderate right. Nixon, the first President to visit China, is the most credible spokesman they can find. The press and the networks will give us carefully selected samples of Nixon's "genius," while keeping him mostly out of sight. As Sherrill shows, Nixon's warts are even uglier now than when he was in office.

Samuel L. Baker

McGOVERN ON NIXON

Washington

Everything in Bob Sherrill's review of Robert Sam Anson's book was on target, including the jab at me for a note I wrote to Nixon commending his role as a peacemaker with China and the Soviet Union.

May I offer a few words of explanation, if not defense, as to why I took that course. My big concern right now is to get Reagan out of office before he blows up the world.

Nixon was outrageous on Vietnam, as was L.B.J. Nobody on the political scene fought them longer and harder on their monstrous behavior than I did. But Nixon did open up relations with China, and he did begin building a structure of détente with the Russians. He was on the way to constructing a Big Power formulation that might have contained the nuclear threat.

Every word and every gesture I have offered Richard Nixon has been designed to move him into breaking with Reagan on this issue. Sherrill (and perhaps Nixon) probably thinks that Nixon was using me. I was trying to use him for a statement rebuking Reagan for his dangerous contribution to the collapse of U.S.-Soviet relations.

If Nixon was the most corrupt President in American history, as I said repeatedly in 1972, Reagan is the most ignorantly dangerous. I concede, however, that it's a close call in pushing the Nixon approach over Reaganism.

George McGovern

TOO SERIOUS TO HAVE FUN

Santa Fe, N.M.

I'm afraid I can't ignore Dave Marsh's mention of Cyndi Lauper and Charlie Chaplin in the same sentence, or his rave review of Lauper in *The Nation* ["Big Girls Don't Cry," June 30]. In the bleak landscape of pop music there are songs with progressive lyrics we can celebrate. Some of them make statements that are antiwar ("99 Red Balloons"), pro-working class ("She Works Hard for the Money"), anti-yuppie ("Lawyers in Love") and even revolutionary ("Electric Avenue"). But to celebrate Lauper as progressive is sorry indeed, and potentially dangerous.

In his overly thorough textual analysis, Marsh overlooks one crucial fact: nobody who listens to pop music lyrics analyzes them. Consequently, the typical listener gleans only the loudest, most often-repeated lyrics (such as Lauper's refrain) and not the deeper, problematic lines, if they do indeed exist. The line "Girls just want to have fun" is reprehensible not only in the use of the sexist word "girls," meaning "young women," but also in the attitude it conveys that (1) women are interested only in leisure, (2) women don't want to take life seriously and (3) we all should have equal rights to refrain from taking life seriously. In a country where Ronald Reagan faces almost certain re-election and where life is threatened by nuclear war and other irreversible environmental disasters, the popularity of "Girls Just Want to Have Fun" is not good news. . . .

Much of pop music is simply enjoyable, not aspiring to any greater significance. And some songs do convey genuinely important messages ("Lawyers in Love," for instance, which uses the medium to mock it). But what is most distressing is that they exist in the almost complete absence of a real counterculture, or of a substantive and meaningful existence for young Americans. The youth of America just want to have cable TV, Porsches and Grenada vacations—in short, fun. Meanwhile, Mondale can't win because he's "too dull" and Jackson is "too inflammatory," while Reagan is charismatic; he has *style*. . . .

In contrast, Charlie Chaplin stood in the forefront of progressive popular culture. Chaplin's tears and sentimentality were always an integral part of his theme: the injustice of the inequality between rich and poor, chic and plain. . . . Lauper's glycerine sobs, video protests and "radical" lyrics are meek by comparison. Unfortunately, the meek, as we all know—especially when accompanied by a ruthless corporate and militaristic government which keeps its populace gladly tuned into mindless commercial activities—shall inherit the earth.

William Westerman

MARSH REPLIES

New York City

I disagree with William Westerman fundamentally. It is not true that nobody who listens to pop music lyrics analyzes them. I did so long before I became a writer on the subject. More instructively, I initially shared his worst impressions of what Lauper says and represents. It was my wife and two teen-age daughters who informed me that this knee-jerk analysis missed the point. So I guess they listen analytically too. We're not weird.

Incidentally, applying the term "girls" to young women is no more sexist than applying the term "boys" to young men.

The rest of Westerman's analysis begs the question, except for those who believe popular culture is valuable only as agitprop. I'm not among them.

Dave Marsh

CORRECTION

Due to an error in the editing process, "The Politics of Voter Registration" [Joel Rogers, July 21-28] included the Governor of Illinois among those who have issued orders banning registration in public-agency waiting rooms. The list should have named the governors of Indiana, Iowa, Pennsylvania and Missouri.

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EDITORIALS.

After San Francisco

San Francisco is not so much a city as a vast urban theme park arranged with stage-prop scenery and tourist attractions. Ride the anachronistic cable cars; explore exotic Chinatown, bizarre Gayland, self-conscious Telegraph Hill; stay one step ahead of the mysterious summer fog; read *The Chronicle*, America's silliest full-size newspaper; eat Seafood Louis, an apotheosis of tuna fish salad with Russian dressing; get laid back . . . and so forth.

The Democratic National Convention seemed to adapt eagerly to its environment, becoming a political park of ideologies, interests and ambitions. Delegates, the media and the thousands of hangers-on (and hangers-out) who crowded the Moscone Center wandered aimlessly (there was no other way) through Mondale's Memory Lane, Hart's Yuppieville, the evanescent Rainbow Coalition, and Cuomo and Ferraro's Little Queens, brought brick by brick from the ethnic East and reassembled on the Pacific Rim. There was a vast special-interest section: floating caucuses for every conceivable whim, displays of corporate power. Throughout the proceedings, a life-size teddy bear roamed the hall promoting fetal rights ("16 million babies a year will not hug me").

Some of the rides were thrilling: Cuomo's eloquent and polished keynote, Jackson's spellbinding sermon, Ferraro's triumphant appearance. Other features were anticlimactic at best: the video show following Hart's speech, the nondebate

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over minority platform planks, Mondale's acceptance speech. Then there were the sadder moments: black delegates booing Coretta Scott King while she chastised them for having booed Andrew Young, various Camelot alumni looking lost in the crowd. But after four exhausting days of sightseeing and despite the Ferraro-engendered good feeling, the park's theme never came together, and the convention, like the party that produced it, remained a collection of sideshows without a main event.

The repeated pledges of unity by the major candidates and lobbies were not convincing. Like Carter's Camp David summit, this convention, aided by the Jackson and Ferraro factors, had about it the air of history in the making. It succeeded primarily in getting the warring parties in one place at one time, without resolving their differences; and the struggle for power within the Democratic Party is likely to intensify, however much the leaders and lieutenants of the various factions may agree to cooperate for the purpose of the campaign.

Of course it is the nature of the Democratic animal to suffer squabbles and fragmentation, but from most recent conventions one candidate and his constituency have emerged to assert at least temporary hegemony over the party. The decadelong contest between centrist and leftist forces in the 1960s ended with a clear-cut (if self-destructive) victory for the left in the McGovern nomination of 1972. The old guard then spent the next several years boring from within, until it managed to gain control of the Carter Administration and the party machinery.

But the struggles in progress are much more diffuse. This time there are at least four contending groups:

§ The Mondale establishment holds the center; there repose a few New Deal survivors, Fair Deal stragglers and the bulk of the New Frontier and Great Society operatives. It is, for the most part, a political bureaucracy in search of a permanent constituency. Its labor leaders cannot always count on their workers, its blacks are far behind those in the ghettos, its feminists cannot command party loyalty from women. Because Mondale is not entirely credible as a winner and because he has not yet fashioned a successful coalition of competing interests, his power over his rivals is exercised mainly by veto or co-optation. Thus he chose a woman as his Vice-Presidential candidate to outflank Hart and Jackson. His acceptance speech invited the party's most conservative elements (Hollings, Glenn, Askew, Wattenberg et al.) into his campaign. He was able to kill three minority planks (voting rights, Pentagon budget cuts and the "no first use" pledge) but was not able to advance a political program with his own vision.

§ The Hart constituency is accurately described as a slice of the potential Reagan vote: the young, white, largely male new middle class that Mondale has not reached and probably will not attract. Its votes (like those of women and blacks) could mean the difference between victory and defeat for the Democrats this year. But the Hart constituency wants power more than it wants victory—and maybe more than it wants Hart. The Coloradan has a tenuous hold on his 5.9 million voters. They were energized more by the style of their candidate than by his supposed new ideas, and since there are dozens in Democratic land with identical styles, Hart could be supplanted at any time by a Bill Bradley, a Christopher Dodd, a Pat Schroeder or a Jay Rockefeller. Hart's generation will doubtless come to power, but it may well come sans Hart. By convention's end, the Hart phenomenon looked more like that of Harold Stassen in 1940 than that of John Kennedy in 1956.

§ Jesse Jackson was an unexpected hero of the convention, for he went into it as the designated bum. One network commentator referred to him as "damaged goods"; reporters wondered in print whether Mondale would even be photographed in his vicinity. If the convention did nothing else it ratified Jackson's political importance and the possibility, however underdeveloped it is now, of the Rainbow Coalition. So far, Jackson has little to show in party rewards for his popular success. But at a smashing "victory celebration" in a Union Square hotel after the Presidential nomination vote, Jackson laid out his demands and sketched his plans.

"It is basic to assume we will have senior policy positions" in the Mondale campaign, he told his delegates, as well as adviser and staff positions at the state and national level. He pledged to organize the Rainbow Coalition state by state to help elect twenty-one black representatives (and perhaps three minority senators) by 1986. Each of the ten Southern states, he said, should have at least one black in Congress. "We can change American politics by bringing in these progressively," he said. "We shall translate this energy into the progressive wing of the Democratic Party."

§ Mario Cuomo's keynote speech and its reception gave him national recognition and instant cachet. "Cuomo for President" buttons appeared within minutes of his address. He seemed to give off a sexual charge to a crowd already titillated by San Francisco's charms. *The Chronicle* quoted the convention's "stars": Nora Ephron called Cuomo "Adlai Stevenson with balls." Rita Mae Brown said he was "incredibly masculine." Malcolm S. Forbes Jr. said "he knew how to use a low voice rather than a high voice." Richard Viguerie noted that Cuomo's "theme is to play music that shows the Democrats are not . . . just the party of gays and longhairs and other strange people . . . [that] they are the people with traditional family values." Herb Caen was ecstatic and coined the word for Mario's fans, "Cuomosexuals."

Cuomo obviously touched some repressed political nerve, and he could be on his way to forming a "fourth force" within the party. From the comments of the fans, it would include white leftists—particularly those in the Jewish community who will never accept Jackson's leadership—as well as white Catholic ethnics who respond to the profoundly conservative sensibility beneath Cuomo's liberal political positions. With Ferraro, whom he resembles in many important respects, Cuomo could stake out a significant band of the Democratic spectrum.

In the short run, the main forces of the Democratic Party may not defeat the Republicans in November. Elections

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often reflect the momentary minutiae of politics rather than the long sweep of history, and the peculiar appeals of Reaganism may be too strong to overcome this time around. But it is not true, as columnist Kevin Phillips asserted, that the Democratic Party is doomed to permanent minority status. His theory—shared by many who regard the prominence of individual constituencies and fail to consider the rise of new coalitions—is that the "feminization" of the party limits its possibilities. The same has been claimed about its ethnicity, its blackness, its unionism.

The purpose of coalitions is precisely to mobilize minority factions into a majority movement. It is a slow, tedious and often painful process. For the Democrats, the art of coalition-building will necessitate a difficult apportionment of influence. None of the groupings within the party can assert sole authority or anything close to it. Mondale, who will be organizing the campaign for at least three months, will have to cede some power to his allies. He did not make a great start. After announcing with great fanfare that he would nominate Ferraro, he seemed to forget her (and the organized women who promoted her) and proceeded to make a series of major decisions for the convention and the campaign with his advisers alone. At least one of those decisions was disastrous: the Bert Lance escapade showed how removed his coterie was from the convention floor. More important than one specific gaffe was the sense of exclusion he generated among his important friends. By last week, Mondale had still not moved to include Jackson people in his organization.

Jesse Jackson had the right idea this year in the theory of the Rainbow Coalition, but in practice it cannot get much further before November except as part of a larger Democratic tide. Mondale must move quickly to include the Rainbow in his own coalition, not as a black auxiliary and a junior partner but as an energetic element in the leadership of the campaign.

There was extraordinary energy on the floor of this convention. Indeed, the floor *was* the convention. Whatever happened in the back rooms could not compare to the drive and enthusiasm of the delegates in response to their symbols and speakers. To win this time, Mondale must comprehend and accommodate that excitement—and not only with his own people, according to his plans, with his direction. To win next time, or the time after that, the Democrats will have to reorganize. One key to the realignment is the new Fairness Commission which will make yet another attempt (following similar ones by George McGovern after 1968 and James B. Hunt after 1972) to rationalize constituent demands in primaries and delegate selection before the next Presidential campaign. Mondale may have always been the choice of the Democrats, but the Hunt rules exaggerated his popularity and pre-eminence at the convention. Although it has been generally unreported, the Fairness Commission is to be appointed by party chairman Charles Manatt and, by common agreement, is to contain in equal parts Hart, Jackson and Mondale elements, as well as women, black, Hispanic and gay representatives. This as yet unselected entity, if it does its work, could have as much to do with the nature of the Democrats' 1988 deliberations as anything that happened in San Francisco. The drama of the party is its diversity, and it plays best to a packed house.

Representing The Nation *in San Francisco were Andrew Kopkind and Victor Navasky, assisted by David Corn, a former* Nation *intern on leave from* Nuclear Times.

Polska Amnestia

The amnesty for Poland's political prisoners announced on July 21 is a victory for the four leaders of KOR. They had turned down a bargain to exchange freedom for political silence, negotiated under the auspices of the church, and now, after thirty months, can leave jail with heads held high.

It is a victory for Solidarity, whose 658 imprisoned members and sympathizers will be freed. Lech Walesa has foiled the officials' attempt to divide it into good proles and evil intellectuals by paying warm tribute to the members of KOR.

Yet it might also be a victory for General Jaruzelski. The authorities can claim that they are strong enough to be magnanimous—and respectable enough to receive needed foreign credits from the West. For his part, the general has been spared an awkward performance. Today in Warsaw, or anywhere else in Eastern Europe, it is impossible to stage a trial on the ghastly model of the Moscow trials of the 1930s. A Jacek Kuron or an Adam Michnik would have used the dock not as a confessional box but as a political platform.

Could the amnesty also mark the victory of common sense and the timid resumption of the process of change dramatically interrupted by the military coup in December 1981? The situation is one of stalemate. Solidarity, still able to publish papers galore, can no longer paralyze the country with a general strike. The regime, for all its power, has failed to attract the intelligentsia or regain the vital support of the mass labor movement. That equation reveals both the necessity and the difficulty of a compromise.

Foreign credits will not be enough for genuine economic reform, which stands a chance only if it is backed by the working people of Poland. That will require a revival of the Gdansk agreements, in terms reflecting the new conditions. Such collaboration would be perilous at best and would involve some sharing of power. Why should Jaruzelski accept now what the regime rejected three years ago?

Indeed, the amnesty itself contains the seeds of discord. The political prisoners are being freed conditionally. If they repeat their "crimes" before the end of 1986 they will have to serve the remainder of their sentences. Perhaps the terms will be interpreted loosely, pleasing those who saw in the resurgent Polish labor movement and in the Gdansk agreements the first signs of a socialist resurrection. But if Jaruzelski uses the amnesty merely to impress the West or to reach an agreement with the Catholic Church above the heads of the workers, his will be a Pyrrhic victory.

DANIEL SINGER

Daniel Singer is The Nation*'s European correspondent and the author of* The Road to Gdansk *(Monthly Review Press).*

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BEAT THE DEVIL.

Disgraceful Democrats

It was odd to look at all those flushed and happy Democratic faces in San Francisco, cheering wildly as they massed around the economic policies of Herbert Hoover and headed for November. In all the commentary about the "new realism" of the Democrats, no one bothered to point out that far from meeting Ronald Reagan halfway, on the famous "middle ground," the Democrats rushed right past him to the rightward edge of the economic spectrum.

Cuomo, Jackson, Ferraro and Mondale all attacked the deficit. None of them attacked the Federal Reserve. Mondale went even further. After some horrifying gusts of America First protectionist rhetoric, he pledged to cut spending and raise taxes. He, Cuomo and Ferraro called for blood, sweat, tears and sacrifice on the part of the American people. Why do politicians in the most prosperous country in the world always think it alluring to promise the people suffering which is, in fact, entirely unnecessary? Ronald Reagan, seasoned in Hollywood, at least understands that people just want to have fun.

From an economic point of view it is hard to see why anyone would want to vote for the Democrats. If it has not already arrived by November the economic downturn will not be far off. In just such a crisis Mondale pledges himself to emulate Hoover. Hoover cut spending and raised taxes just as the nation was about to plunge into the Great Depression. It is his policy rather than that of his successor that the Democrats chose to recall.

It was worse than that. Mondale pledged to sustain and deepen recession around the world. "To countries that close their markets to us," Mondale cried, "my message is: We will not be pushed around anymore. We will have a President who stands up for American workers and American businesses and American farmers and international trade." Cuomo invoked "Lackawanna, where thousands of unemployed steelworkers wonder why we subsidize foreign steel."

What does such talk—the same ugly, chauvinist idiom John Connally used in 1976 when he urged that the Japanese be made to look at their own television sets on the docks of Yokohama—mean? It means forcing American manufactured goods on developing countries trying desperately to industrialize and thus earn foreign exchange. It means telling a Brazilian steelworker that his only comparative advantage, the price of his labor, must be nullified in order to preserve the superior living standards of his North American brother. It means the protectionism that fed the Great Depression. It means precisely the social Darwinism that Cuomo denounced to those flag-waving Democrats. Thus do humanity and compassion stop at the water's edge.

Ethnostalgia

Cuomo's speech was eloquent but had little to do with our era, and perhaps that is why it was nice to listen to, like one of the old tunes from memory lane. Cuomo denounced Reagan's "hysterical commitment to an arms race that leads nowhere," but New York State begs for defense spending and welcomes the battleship Iowa to Staten Island. And last year Cuomo helped prevent Andrei Gromyko from visiting the United Nations. "We Democrats," Cuomo said, "believe that we can make it all the way with the whole family intact. . . . Wagon train after wagon train. . . . The whole family aboard." Today's Democrats believe nothing of the sort, as a glance at Thomas Byrne Edsall's excellent *The New Politics of Inequality* graphically attests. Edsall points out that in a landmark shift in interest in 1978, the ninety-fifth Congress, with Democratic majorities in Senate and House and with a Democratic President, saw the passage of a tax bill that "cut the top tax rate on capital gains, a form of income earned almost exclusively by the very rich, from 48 to 28 percent, while raising the Social Security tax, which, because it is applied to the first dollar earned but exempts entirely income in excess of $37,800 as of 1984, is the most regressive social levy." The rhetoric of ethnostalgia wears thin quickly, given the unpalatable facts of politics today.

"I heard you," Mondale announced to those who "voted for Ronald Reagan." The implication seemed to be that having thus heard, he would try to out-Reagan Reagan in order to get all those voters back. But Reagan at least offered hope. Mondale and Cuomo could have answered him properly by offering a full-employment program and calling for a new international order. They could even, God knows, have invoked the spirit of the U.N. charter. But they didn't. The writing has been on the wall ever since the Democrats started their opportunistic ranting about deficits. There's nothing wrong with deficits per se. All the howling about mortgaging our children's future is the most outrageous rot. Why not say "investing in our children's future"? It's not the deficit but where the deficit is invested that should be discussed. It was no accident, as the Buddhists say, that Cuomo invoked the wisdom of Republican bankers on the true state of the economy. It would be impossible, one might have thought, to find an economic strategy designed to show that of Ronald Reagan in a benign light, but as the shameful rhetoric from San Francisco made clear, the Democrats managed to.

Regrets Only

Being black means always having to say you're sorry. First Jesse Jackson and then Vanessa Williams issued apologies to the American people. Americans like apologies. It's a cheap way of feeling good, as the apologizer gets down in the dirt and grovels. Then you can either be big about it and accept the apology or say you are adopting a "wait and see if he means it" attitude.

Jackson was, of course, the progressive voice in San Francisco, and the commentators gleefully reported the crushing of his platform demands. They'd reel off his calls for enforcement of the Voting Rights Act, diminished military spending and so forth, and then say, in a curve of rising petulance, "What does Jackson *want*?"

In the end all the spleen against Jackson and all the sup-

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pressed male rage against Geraldine Ferraro got displaced on poor Vanessa Williams. Men had coped with the Ferraro threat by making her into a man, calling her "ballsy." The Freud memorial couch cushion in this category goes to Representative Tony Coelho, who said Ferraro "isn't a threat; she is not a feminist with wounds." Men are mad and by extraordinary bad luck, Williams came into the line of fire at precisely the wrong moment. And she was not posing with just anyone. *She was posing with another woman.* I doubt if even a full repudiation of Louis Farrakhan and all he stands for would have got Williams off the hook at that point.

Naming as Ritual

It's the essence of a witch hunt that the past is re-created as guilty secret. Williams took off her clothes in a Mount Kisco studio and, years later, was "unmasked" for that unclothing. Alastair Reid spoke offhandedly to a seminar and, years later, was "unmasked" in *The Wall Street Journal.* And now John Gregory Dunne unmasks the supposedly Hispanic novelist Danny Santiago as the Commie Anglo Daniel James, in *The New York Review of Books. The New York Times* picked up the story and, just as it did the Reid affair, ran it on the front page.

It's true that James sanctioned Dunne's article and—so Carl Brandt, his agent, tells me—is relieved to be freed from the constriction of his false identity. But the way *The Times* ran the story from *The New York Review*, it seemed a reenactment, a mime, of the ritual of naming names. McCarthyized in 1951 and forced into pseudonymity, James has been McCarthyized all over again in 1984. Dunne's narrative, self-regarding, contrived and conservative in the patented Didion-Dunne manner, had the whiff of the witch hunter while purporting to be something else. Edwin McDowell's piece in *The Times* reeked of it.

Of course, since there is hardly a left in America to be extirpated, the witch hunter must turn to ever more ludicrous substitutes, and verbs like "admit," "confess" and "disclose" are pressed into ever more trivial service. Mark Twain will soon "admit" that this was not his true name. George Sand will "disclose" her true sex. Beauty queens, recruited to a degraded and fetishistic ritual called a pageant, will be denounced for having exploited their sex on terms other than those laid down by a bunch of promoters in Atlantic City. Fear enters the soul.

Poper Scooper

How does *The New York Times* now plan to cover the Agca case? A few weeks ago, at the express command of A.M. Rosenthal, *The Times* ran, across two pages, Claire Sterling's overheated and selective digest of the prosecution's case for a supposed K.G.B.-Bulgarian link in a plot to kill the Pope. Since it has been tireless in recent months in exposing purported lapses in journalistic ethics and decorum, many wondered how the paper could justify using Sterling as a reporter. She has been a major exponent in the plot theory and has profited mightily, along with former C.I.A. officer Paul Henze, therefrom.

The case against the plot has always been strong, and there are those (me) who named Bulgarian martyr to cold war hysteria Sergei Antonov—still rotting in a Roman cell—Prisoner of Conscience for 1983. But since the publication of prosecutor Antonio Albano's brief, mainstream reporters, no doubt irked by the Sterling "scoop," have been taking another look at the case.

Among them is Michael Dobbs of *The Washington Post.* Dobbs's latest dispatch flatly challenges the Sterling thesis:

§ Agca's repeated claims that he went to St. Peter's Square the day before the shooting with Antonov and co-Bulgarian Todor Aivasov are contradicted by the sworn testimony of an Italian customs official, Maurizio Lucchetta, who insists that he was with Aivasov on customs business in another part of Rome at the time. He has produced documentary evidence to back up the claim.

§ Sterling and the prosecutor (the two are impossible to distinguish) have made great play of the famous sealed truck that allegedly bore Agca's Turkish colleague Oral Celik out of the country minutes after the attack on the Pope. It now turns out that this truck, sealed by the Italian customs hours before the gunplay, was parked in a public street outside the Bulgarian Embassy in full view of Italian merchants, who were no doubt reading Mario Cuomo's diaries in the peace and quiet of their stores. By the Albano/Sterling scenario, the Bulgarians had to have broken the customs' seals, shoved in the rascally Turk and resealed the truck, all in front of those merchants. Surely even Cuomo's works lack this magnetism.

§ Albano/Sterling exult over the fact that Agca knew the Bulgarians' home telephone numbers, which he said had been given to him in Sofia in the summer of 1980. That may be, but the numbers were, in fact, available from the Rome phone directory which Agca has admitted he looked at in jail after his conviction, when he was in the process of developing his account of the plot. He also had full access to newspapers and television while divulging his accounts of his own role in the plot. Thus, as he now admits, his encyclopedic knowledge of the layout of Antonov's apartment came from the media.

In the March/April issue of *Problems of Communism*, put out by the United States Information Agency, there is an interesting review by William Hood of Sterling's *The Time of the Assassins* and Henze's *The Plot to Kill the Pope.* Hood is a veteran of the O.S.S. and then the C.I.A. and is a loyal servant of the flag. He is scathing about the "plot" and concludes with this rather emphatic hint:

> Curiously, neither Sterling nor Henze adequately credits the possibility that Western intelligence already has even some slight access to Bulgarian or Soviet secrets. . . . in view of the skepticism and apparent lack of interest in the attempted assassination expressed by various Western intelligence services, it is not out of the question to suggest that the real (and rather unsensational) story may actually be known—but cannot be disclosed because the sources must be protected.

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DISPATCHES.

■ NICARAGUA: Not-So-Comic Capers

Unusual documentary evidence that belies Director of Central Intelligence William Casey's assurances that the Reagan Administration is not trying to overthrow the Sandinista government has just emerged. Now circulating in Nicaragua is "The Freedom Fighter's Manual," an illustrated pamphlet in the style of a comic book. It encourages citizens to join in the "final battle against the usurpers of the authentic Sandinista revolution. . . . There is an essential economic infrastructure that any government needs to function, which can easily be disabled and even paralyzed without the use of armaments."

The style of the sixteen-page booklet reminds one nostalgically of a 1950s U.S. government handout on civil defense, but this one is filled with suggestions on how to sabotage the Nicaraguan economy. Pouring sand into car engines, spilling tacks on highways and clogging up toilets with sponges are strongly recommended. Not all the techniques are strictly in the realm of sabotage. One series of illustrations shows how to make a Molotov cocktail; another depicts breaking the windows of the local police station with a slingshot. Presumably with the fainthearted in mind, the manual also endorses reporting late for work.

A peasant found the pamphlet stuffed in the door of a house in the town of Ocotal, near the Honduran border, shortly after a June 1 attack by members of the Nicaraguan Democratic Force, the *contra* group most heavily dependent on C.I.A. financing. Eventually the pamphlet reached Betsy Cohn, director of the Central American Historical Institute at Georgetown University. She passed it on to Robert Parry of the Associated Press for confirmation of its authorship, aware he had sources within the American intelligence community. Despite the predictable official denial, Parry's sources told him the booklet was indeed prepared by the C.I.A. for distribution by the Nicaraguan *contras*. Although it has received major play in Baltimore, Miami and Minneapolis newspapers, the story has received scant notice in *The New York Times*.

It took a scholar to make the next observation. Cohn says she became curious when she noticed that some of the Spanish used in the pamphlet—for example, the words for faucet and tire—is not typically Nicaraguan.

With the huge increase in the agency's budget, one would think that the least Casey could do is produce a culturally sensitive comic book.

■ UNITED NATIONS: Take a Meeting

Late in July, the United Nations' Council on Namibia held a four-day conference in Montreal. The subject was South Africa's defiant occupation of the former German colony. Everything went smoothly—except that on the whole, the council would rather have been in Atlanta.

There were sound political reasons to hold the meeting in Atlanta or in Chicago, another preferred location. The council's mandate is to publicize internationally the plight of Namibia, and earlier this year, conferences had been held for that purpose in Bangkok, Thailand, and Ljubljana, Yugoslavia. When it came time to choose a site for a North American seminar, the council thought that media exposure would be greatest in a U.S. city less accustomed than New York to international meetings, and that cities with large black populations, and black administrations, would likely be the most cooperative and hospitable.

Enter the State Department. Its recent reliance on the McCarran-Walter Act, which enables the government to refuse to issue entry visas to foreigners it deems undesirable, gave the council second thoughts. Perhaps the State Department would deny a visa to a prospective invitee—such as Ernest Tjiriange, Swapo's Secretary of Legal Affairs, who resides in Angola. Generally, the United States is bound by treaty to admit diplomats and other guests invited officially by the United Nations. But if the United Nations schedules a meeting outside Manhattan, visitors are subject to political vetting by the State Department.

Discreet inquiries were made to the U.N. mission headed by Jeane Kirkpatrick. No, visas would not be a problem, an official on Kirkpatrick's staff told the council's president, Zambian delegate Paul Lusaka, but the government wanted "certain assurances" about the seminar before it would agree to a location outside New York. Specifically, the U.S. mission sought to guarantee that the seminar would not pass a resolution criticizing U.S. policy on Namibia—which is precisely what had happened at the meeting in Bangkok. Lusaka responded that the council could hardly give assurances about a seminar that hadn't taken place.

Gerald Scott, the political officer for African affairs in the U.S. mission, refused to go on record about the negotiations with the council, so we can't tell you about his denial.

■ THE PHILIPPINES: From Priest to Revolutionary

"Those who advocate non-violence are actually defending the status quo, which inflicts the violence of exploitation on the masses." Such are the teachings of Father Conrado Balweg, S.V.D., the target of a month-old counter-insurgency operation launched by the government of President Ferdinand Marcos.

Balweg has led attacks on army outposts in The Cordillera, a mountainous region of Luzon, 200 miles north of Manila. He recently told *Veritas*, a weekly publication sponsored by the Catholic Church and a group of liberal Manila businessmen, about his transformation from priest to revolutionary. "I knew that the soldiers I faced also came from the basic masses. One had to internalize the idea that the soldiers were doing the dirty work of class enemies like Marcos. . . . They're the ones I saw in my sights. The experience made me lose sleep for a month."

Balweg, 39, is one of the estimated 10,000 guerrillas belonging to the leftist New People's Army (N.P.A.) which controls about 10 percent of the countryside. He joined the N.P.A. in June 1979 after being told by his bishop that a government minister had hired assassins to kill him. Balweg's work among his own ethnic minority, Tingguian peasants,

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KAI BIRD AND MAX HOLLAND

became political in 1973, when he opposed the efforts of Cellophil Resources Corporation, an agricultural development firm associated with Imelda Marcos, to obtain a forestry concession in the region.

The turning point for Balweg seems to have come when a dozen West German priests associated with his mission, the Society of the Divine Word, denounced him and three other Philippine priests for being Communists. Of that time Balweg says, "I was not a Communist. I had never met one." His first introduction to Communists came in 1976, when he met some N.P.A. sympathizers in the church, who aided him in the campaign against Cellophil. In late 1978, Balweg says, he finally read his first Marxist text, *Philippine Society and Revolution*, by Amado Guerrero, which is regarded as the N.P.A. bible.

Balweg believes the church is undergoing a "transformation." In a devout country like the Philippines, that factor may determine whether an insurgency like the N.P.A. will become more than an irritant to the Marcos regime. While the Catholic hierarchy, in the person of Cardinal Jaime Sin, has denounced Balweg, he nonetheless evokes strong sympathy from many of the faithful. In the countryside, graffiti on the walls reads "Ninoy [former Senator Benigno Aquino] Is Our Hero—Balweg Is Our Idol."

■ SOUTH AFRICA: 'Sniffing Planes'

Last winter the French satirical publication *Le Canard Enchaîné* revealed that the government of President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing had authorized the expenditure of $250 million on planes that could supposedly "sniff" oil and water deposits by measuring the earth's magnetic field. The planes turned out to be bogus, and their inventor, Count Alain de Villegas, disappeared, to the embarrassment of Giscard and his colleagues [see Daniel Singer, "Auto Workers and 'Sniffing Planes,'" *The Nation*, February 25].

Now press and French government investigations of the fraud are revealing a tangled web of right-wing financiers and politicians that reaches far beyond France. Another big loser was the government of South Africa. Officials in oil-poor Pretoria have admitted that they spent tens of millions of rands on tests of the planes.

Among others, Count de Villegas persuaded Florimond Damman, a financier who has since died, to invest in the invention. Both de Villegas and Damman, according to the London monthly *African Business*, had connections to the World Anti-Communist League. Damman was also a member in good standing of the pro-apartheid Belgian-Rhodesian Association. A Paris lawyer, Jean Violet, familiar to French parliamentary investigators as a lobbyist for South Africa, was responsible for drawing the investors into the scheme. He persuaded Gaullist politician Antoine Pinay to lend his prestige to the project and eventually to convince the government oil corporation, Elf-ERAP, to invest state funds.

Pinay is no stranger to right-wing scandal. According to the Johannesburg *Star* he was associated with a slush fund to buy favorable P.R. for the apartheid regime, set up by former South African Information Minister Connie Mulder. The *Star* says Pinay cooperated in the latest scheme "out of political conviction, not self-interest."

Of the estimated 750 million French francs lost by Elf-ERAP, only 150 million francs have been recovered. Some of the money had been earmarked to finance the digging of water wells in drought-stricken Niger. Such repercussions make the case of Giscard's "sniffing planes" something more than a simple farce.

■ KAMPUCHEA: Another Sideshow?

While Congress focuses on the "secret" war in Central America, the Reagan Administration has been quietly providing direct aid to anti-Vietnamese guerrillas in Kampuchea. "A highly-placed ASEAN [Association of Southeast Asian Nations] source" told the *Far Eastern Economic Review* in June that the United States is channeling funds to two of the three factions in the Democratic Kampuchea Coalition which seeks to overthrow the Vietnamese-backed Heng Samrin regime. The coalition includes forces from Pol Pot's Khmer Rouge.

According to the source, supporters of Prince Norodom Sihanouk, leader of the center-right faction, have just started to receive covert U.S. aid; the faction led by Son Sann, the Khmer People's National Liberation Front, has been on the dole for a while. The covert assistance is said to be completely separate from acknowledged U.S. border relief and takes the form of cash, funneled through the C.I.A. with few strings attached.

Members of ASEAN have pressured the United States to provide such aid for some time. The group fears the resurrection of an old Vietnamese idea: a Hanoi-led "Indochina Federation" that would formalize Vietnamese domination of Kampuchea and Laos. Perhaps the most serious concern of Heng Samrin's opponents is the increase in Vietnamese immigration. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State John C. Monjo told Congress last fall that the migration is "officially sponsored." Vietnamese and Kampuchean officials deny Monjo's charges, noting that illegal movement across the border is difficult to control. And a recent report by the Indochina Project for the Washington-based Center for International Policy concludes:

> Many [migrants] say they are trying to get away from the restrictions of Socialism in Vietnam. Others say there is more money to be made in Cambodia or that they are looking for adventure. Young men often say they left to avoid service in the army.

But some Western diplomats and a number of Khmer worry that even without an official policy of colonization, Hanoi could eventually exploit unorganized migration to assert political and cultural control over Kampuchea. Nevertheless, says the report's author, Murray Hiebert, most Khmer would not be happy to see the Vietnamese leave. Should Vietnam withdraw its troops, "either the Khmer Rouge would come back or there would be total chaos."

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CALVIN TRILLIN

I ran into an academic friend of mine called Big Grant Beckerman and found him looking distraught. By now, of course, I'm accustomed to seeing Big Grant in a nervous state: he applies for so many grants that he's virtually always facing some sort of deadline. "Can't stop to talk now," he'll say. "The Carnegie proposal's got to be in by 4. I still owe the Rockefeller panel three support letters on the history consultancy. Also, if this budget narrative isn't Federal Expressed to N.I.M.H. overnight tonight we're out of the running. Good to see you." That final remark is usually barely audible, since Big Grant is already scurrying down the street, half trotting while pawing through a bulging briefcase for the forms he's always worried about losing. On those rare days when Big Grant isn't facing a deadline he is likely to be upset by one of the rumors he's heard about the grant-giving world—some horrifying tale about how some government agency might be planning to change its emphasis from replication to felt need.

This time, though, Big Grant seemed disconsolate rather than anxious. "What's the matter, Big?" I asked. "You look as if you've just heard that the Ford Foundation decided to give all the money back to Henry."

"N.E.H.," Big Grant said. "Haven't you heard?"

"N.E.H.?"

"The National Endowment for the Humanities," Big Grant said. "The Reagan Administration is packing the board with loonies."

I had, in fact, read that the Reagan Administration's recent nominations to the council overseeing N.E.H. grants had been interpreted as indicating an intention to make the council a repository for what I believe intellectuals refer to as the Meshugeneh Right. Describing the new nominees, Richard Lyman, a former vice chairman of the council who is president of the Rockefeller Foundation, told *The New York Times*, "The chief common thread seems to be working for the right-to-life movement." From other news accounts, I gathered that the principal intellectual credential of one nominee is the co-chairmanship of the Virginia chapter of the Moral Majority.

At the time, I rather enjoyed picturing a meeting of the N.E.H. council once the Reagan folks had it completely packed with true believers. I saw it as a kind of nutso United Nations. The consideration of almost any proposal causes one of the council's Moral Majority preachers to rail against heathenism and enjoyable fornication. The other council members are having difficulty concentrating on the sermon, though, because a couple of former HUAC investigators (both of them emeritus professors of the history of subversion at Pepperdine) are crawling around under the boardroom table, looking for Communists. Somebody else is sniffing suspiciously at the water pitcher, on the lookout for a fluoridation plot. At the end of the table, an intense-looking man with a 1950s crew cut has buttonholed the council member next to him and launched what promises to be a four-hour explanation of why this country is a republic, not a democracy. The right-to-life people are noisily unrolling huge posters of fetuses. In the corner, a couple of Young Americans for Freedom huddle together, discussing socialist inroads and acne remedies. A lobbyist for the Heritage Foundation is standing on his chair to finish assembling a plaster-of-Paris model of the American Way of Life.

"For it is as in the final days of Rome," the preacher is saying. "Despoilation and unnatural acts and liquor by the drink . . . "

"Be sure to check the drawers," one of the ex-HUAC gumshoes is saying to his partner as they clonk around under the table. "Lots of times they hide in drawers, way in the back."

I should have realized that Big Grant Beckerman, a man accustomed to analyzing the members of grant panels the way a devout horse-handicapper studies the nags, could hardly be expected to find such unchartable chaos entertaining. I tried to cheer him up by reminding him that he had adapted to changing moods in Washington in the past. When the Carters were talking a lot about grass-roots culture, Big Grant submitted a proposal for a traveling exhibit of books and manuscripts called "Home-Grown: A Display of the Local and Mediocre." When Reagan named a neoconservative to chair the N.E.H., Big Grant submitted a history proposal with a thesis that amounted to this: Slavery was bad, of course, but could the slaves be said to have suffered compared to the Yeshiva student on Norman Podhoretz's block in Brooklyn who lived in constant peril of being ridiculed by black teen-agers for throwing like a girl?

"This is different," Big Grant said sadly. "This is the cuckoo club."

"Why not approach it head-on, Big?" I said. "An epic poem about the value of loonies in American life."

"I could never think of a rhyme for 'wackos,'" Big said. "Maybe I'll go back to teaching." He shuddered.

"Tobaccos," I said.

"Tobaccos?"

"A rhyme for 'wackos,'" I said.

Big Grant just shook his head. He looked beaten—a traveling salesman who had just lost his biggest account. I had to remind Big Grant that there was a problem with his going back to teaching. Several years ago, he confessed to me that he had forgotten his original academic discipline. I don't mean that he was rusty on the material; I mean he had forgotten what his original academic discipline was.

Big Grant considered that for a while. Finally he said, "I suppose it could begin, 'Ever since the settlers came here and found Indians curing various tobaccos/America has depended on its wackos.'"

"Well, something along that line," I said.

But Big Grant didn't seem to hear me. He was pawing through his briefcase. "I think the poetry deadline's this week," he said. "Got to get the forms. Can't stop to talk. Good to see you."

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ARTICLES.

THE HAVE-NOTS

Upton Sinclair's EPIC Campaign

GREG MITCHELL

Amid the debate over whether the left should become an energetic force within the Democratic Party or the architect of grass-roots political coalitions outside the party system, it is instructive to examine a social movement that, a half-century ago, assumed both roles. Upton Sinclair's nearly successful run for Governor of California provides a stirring example of how "have-nots" organized around an electoral campaign can have a lasting effect on public policy, even in defeat.

Fifty years ago this month, Sinclair, muckraking author of *The Jungle* and, in the words of H.L. Mencken, "the leading living Socialist of this great Republic," handily defeated seven mainstream candidates to win the Democratic nomination for Governor. It looked like Uppie, as he was known to friends, would roll to victory that November. But he was derailed by an outrageously costly smear campaign, "the first all-out public relations *Blitzkrieg* in American politics," as Arthur Schlesinger Jr. has described it. When the more than 2 million votes were counted, Sinclair had lost to a Republican hack, Frank Merriam, but his End Poverty in California (EPIC) campaign had had enormous repercussions. It helped tilt the New Deal to the left, radicalized a generation of Californians, and forever changed politics in the state.

As a lifelong socialist and one of the most widely read American authors, Upton Sinclair was an unlikely nominee for high-level office. He had run for Governor twice before on the Socialist Party line but gathered only about 50,000 votes each time. But in 1934, the 55-year-old Sinclair observed a California wracked by Depression and despair. While holding fast to his socialist ideals, he reasoned that the only way to effect change in a hurry was to run as a Democrat.

Despite the denunciations of Socialist leaders, Sinclair was undeterred. Many other leftists supported his effort. In a letter to Norman Thomas, who strongly opposed Sinclair's flirtation with the Democrats, Jerry Voorhis, one of EPIC's leading organizers, called the campaign "the nearest thing to a mass movement toward Socialism that I have heard of in America." And Carey McWilliams, who covered the campaign for *The Nation*, called EPIC "without a doubt the finest example of a truly grass-roots campaign in the state's political history."

Sinclair's campaign platform, a sixty-four-page booklet titled *I, Governor of California and How I Ended Poverty: A True Story of the Future*, borrowed freely from proposals put forward by everyone from Huey Long to Dr. Francis Townsend. Sinclair called for a steeply graduated state income tax and Social Security-type pensions for the elderly and the needy, prefiguring New Deal programs. Denouncing private ownership of factories as "a basis of enslavement," Sinclair proposed a new rallying cry: Production for use! Under his scheme, the state would put a half-million of the unemployed to work in idle factories and on unused farmland. The workers would be paid in scrip and would produce goods and food "for themselves, not for others." *I, Governor* sold out its first printing of 50,000 in a matter of days; eventually, it became an all-time California best seller, with a quarter-million copies sold.

In late 1933, chapters of Sinclair's End Poverty League began forming all over the state; they numbered almost 2,000 by November 1934. The league put out a tabloid weekly, the *EPIC News*, which at its height had a circulation of more than 2 million. Sinclair—short, wiry, intense, at times witty and with a voice like James Cagney's—spoke at rallies that many observers compared to religious revivals. Communist Party members often heckled, but Dorothy Healey, the former head of the party in Southern California, now admits that "in retrospect, our opposition was preposterous, given the slogans 'End poverty' and 'Production for use' and the hundreds of thousands following EPIC."

Sinclair's opponents in the primary—among them the

DRAWINGS BY FRANCES JETTER

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powerful George Creel, wartime propagandist for Woodrow Wilson and later an official at the National Recovery Administration—denounced the EPIC candidate as a stooge of the Russians, but on primary day Sinclair got more than 435,000 votes, more than his seven foes combined. Almost two-thirds of the EPIC candidates running for the party's nomination for State Assembly won as well. *The Nation* gave "thanks" that Sinclair had "gained the first round."

Some of America's greatest writers came to California to cover the EPIC surge. Mencken wrote that "the whole country is attracted by the spectacle." Will Rogers said that if Sinclair could deliver even *some* of the things he had promised he "should not be Governor of one state, but President of all of 'em." And Theodore Dreiser called EPIC "the most impressive political phenomenon that America has yet produced."

Sinclair had been the object of some amusement to conservative Californians during the primary campaign, but once he gained the nomination they viewed him as a threat. Nearly every newspaper in the state lined up behind Merriam; some of the papers that spoke up for Sinclair folded when advertisers abandoned them. The *Los Angeles Times* called the Merriam-Sinclair race "a vital struggle between constructive and destructive forces. Sinclair is a visionary consorter with radicals."

William Randolph Hearst led the press attack, calling Sinclair "an unbalanced and unscrupulous political speculator." An editorial cartoon in Hearst's *Los Angeles Examiner* pictured Sinclair as "The Fourth Horseman," racing to catch up with Hitler, Stalin and Mussolini. Every day, on its front page, the L.A. *Times* printed excerpts from Sinclair's novels, creatively edited to offend every ethnic and interest group in the state. (One implied that Sinclair was in favor of "nationalizing children.") *Time* even put Sinclair on its cover, remarking that "those whose stakes in California are greatest hold themselves personally responsible to their class throughout the nation to smash Upton Sinclair."

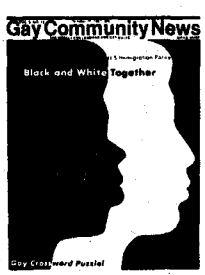
Orchestrating the smear campaign was the prominent Los Angeles advertising firm Lord and Thomas, which had been hired by the Republicans. Press agents were imported from afar, perhaps for the first time in any state campaign. Their blitzkrieg was financed by a G.O.P. war chest of about $10 million—a record for any state campaign until recently. They created dozens of front groups (financed by a secret slush fund), printed millions of scurrilous leaflets, put up thousands of Red-baiting billboards. There was even a "dirty tricks" squad. ("We hired the scum of the street to carry placards [saying] 'Vote for Upton Sinclair,'" a Lord and Thomas manager later admitted.) Corporations and banks sent letters to stockholders and depositors, informing them that their holdings would be imperiled if Sinclair won. Thousands of employers threatened to fire workers who supported EPIC. In Alameda County a District Attorney named Earl Warren warned that "we must fortify ourselves against a resolute purpose to overwhelm California with Communism." In the final weeks of the campaign, editorial cartoonists and pamphleteers scoffed that EPIC stood for Every Pauper Is Coming and pictured California sinking under a wave of freeloaders.

To combat the attack the End Poverty League had barely $100,000, raised from small donations and the sale of newspapers and books. The campaign's richest resource was the zeal of the newly converted and the candidate himself, who stumped tirelessly up and down the state. Sinclair was, Carey McWilliams wrote, a "superb propagandist and educator." To raise funds for EPIC, eighteen prominent Americans, including Clarence Darrow, Theodore Dreiser and Margaret Sanger, took out an advertisement in *The Nation*, appealing for $100 donations from "liberal-minded persons." They observed: "This is not merely a California enterprise. Its results will be noted all over the world, and nowhere more carefully than in our national capital."

The fatal blows to Sinclair's campaign were delivered by the lords of Hollywood and the baron of Hyde Park. The film moguls, a reactionary crew, were aghast at Sinclair's plan to let out-of-work actors take over abandoned Hollywood sound stages and make their own movies (under the direction of Sinclair's friend, Charles Chaplin, no less). They threatened to move their studios to Florida and raised $500,000 for Merriam by deducting one day's pay from about 30,000 of their employees. Only a handful stood up against this outrage, notably Chaplin, Katherine Hepburn, James Cagney and Jean Harlow.

Louis B. Mayer of M-G-M, the leader of Hollywood's anti-Sinclair efforts, ordered the boy-wonder producer, Ir-

GayCommunityNews



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ving Thalberg, to make fake newsreels and showed them in hundreds of theaters via Hearst's Metrotone News. In some, an "inquiring reporter" interviewed actors with Russian accents posing as Sinclair backers. Others showed a stream of hobos (actors, again, in fake beards and whiskers) crossing the California state line, searching for the utopia promised by the EPIC candidate. The inaccuracy didn't bother Thalberg. "Nothing is unfair in politics," he said. Riots occurred in several movie theaters where the newsreels were screened. Nevertheless, *The Hollywood Reporter* gushed its approval and commented, "Never before in the history of the picture business has the screen been used in direct support of a candidate." That manipulation of motion pictures to affect a political campaign was a precursor of the television-based campaigns of today.

Still, Sinclair might have pulled it off with the endorsement of Franklin Roosevelt. After visiting F.D.R. at Hyde Park shortly after his primary victory, Sinclair had boasted that such support was on its way. Roosevelt adviser Harry Hopkins had even called Sinclair's rise "a great thing." But in the fall of 1934, the President was seeking an alliance with bankers and businessmen; to encourage that breakthrough, a number of Democrats had formed the Liberty League. Roosevelt, often tagged with the "socialist" label himself, may have felt that allying himself with Sinclair would make him too vulnerable.

A record Democratic tide swept the nation on election day. In California EPIC candidates, running as Democrats, won twenty-nine seats in the State Assembly. Culbert Olson was elected to the State Senate. Sinclair polled over 879,000 votes, but lost to Merriam by almost 260,000. (Merriam received 48.8 percent of the votes; Sinclair, 37.3 percent; and a third-party candidate, 12.9 percent.) Communist Party and Socialist Party candidates garnered less than 9,000 votes between them, an indication of EPIC's appeal to the left.

Sinclair vowed to fight on. EPIC clubs and publications proclaimed that they were here to stay, but they were not. Sapped by dissension—including some anti-Communism encouraged by Sinclair himself—and by permanent defections to the Democratic Party, which EPIC had vitalized, the movement withered and died by 1938. Sinclair wrote many more books and lived until 1968.

But EPIC's influence endured. Governor Merriam surprised many by embracing a number of Sinclair's proposals, including a state income tax. More important, the EPIC campaign "revamped the map of California politics by giving the state, for the first time, a New Deal Democratic Party," according to Carey McWilliams. (To this day California Democrats are among America's most progressive.) Olson became Governor in 1938, the first Democrat to hold the office in forty years. That same year, Sinclair's former running mate, Sheridan Downey—EPIC's opponents had called them "Uppie and Downey"—was elected to the U.S. Senate. Several former EPIC candidates won seats in the House of Representatives, including Augustus Hawkins and Jerry Voorhis. (Ironically, Richard Nixon ended Voorhis's Congressional career in the notorious 1946 Red-baiting

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campaign, and won a Senate seat in 1950 after Downey stepped down.) For leftists and poor people in California, EPIC was significant "for the radicalization it produced," Dorothy Healey recalls, "the focal point it provided, the coherence it brought to a diverse movement." And Hollywood's performance during the campaign helped inspire the formation of the Writer's Guild in 1937.

On a national level, EPIC was no less influential. Near the end of 1934 Harry Hopkins proposed a program, similar to EPIC in spirit, called End Poverty in America. Sinclair's big vote, along with rising national support for Francis Townsend's pension plan, indicated to F.D.R. that the moment to push for Social Security legislation had finally arrived. In 1935 Roosevelt sent Congress a measure that embraced many EPIC suggestions, including a gift tax and graduated corporate and personal income taxes. He also proposed the Works Progress Administration.

But there was a negative legacy as well. The anti-EPIC smear campaign, as Schlesinger put it, "marked a new advance in the art of public relations, in which advertising men now believed they could sell or destroy political candidates as they sold one brand of soap and defamed its competitor." Nineteen thirty-four's innovation has become 1984's stock in trade. Even so, the story of EPIC suggests the possible rewards, win or lose, of independent political organizing on the left. □

THE PIK PROGRAM

Subsidizing The Surplus

THERESA BRAINE

In 1983 a single cotton conglomerate in central California received a handout from the Federal government worth enough to feed approximately 17,000 poor people in this country for one year. The U.S. Department of Agriculture gave C.J. Ritchie Farms a present of cotton worth $3.6 million—an outlay sufficient to feed 8,080 individuals under the WIC program and 2,949 families (almost 9,000 people) under the food stamp program. That was a reward for leaving 8,064 acres idle. C.J. Ritchie also received $114,875 worth of wheat for not planting that crop on 477 acres. Those gifts were issued under the Agriculture Department's Payment-in-Kind (PIK) program. According to a General Accounting Office survey, last year fifteen giant farming conglomerates received a total of $23 million worth of crops directly from the Federal government under the program.

Since President Reagan took office, once-prosperous farmers have seen a dramatic drop in their fortunes. In fact, many family farms haven't been this badly off since 1929. In 1982 there were 230 million metric tons of surplus grain, cotton and other crops. Prices plummeted and farm foreclosures abounded. Even the Administration had to acknowledge that government intervention was necessary. The following year it spent $27 billion on farm subsidy programs, almost seven times the pre-1982 annual average of $4 billion. PIK absorbed $10 billion of that. Touted as a miracle price-support plan and hailed by most U.S. agriculture experts and some farmers as the cure for a collapsing farm economy, PIK has wound up following the pattern of other Reagan Administration programs: benefiting the rich at the taxpayers' expense.

Secretary of Agriculture John Block and his staff devised PIK to complement already existing cash-subsidy programs. Last year under traditional price-support plans, farmers could idle up to 50 percent of their base acreage (the amount of land on which they would normally grow a particular crop) and be paid in cash at the beginning of the growing season. With PIK, farmers who were participating fully in other subsidy programs could idle as much as 100 percent of their base acreage. In return, the government paid them with surplus commodities, the bulk of which it had obtained from farmers as collateral for price-support loans. Wheat farmers could get as much as 95 percent of the wheat they would have reaped; participating cotton farmers were entitled to up to 80 percent of their land's potential harvest. Other farmers were similarly subsidized with corn, rice and other commodities.

This crop swap was implemented without Congressional approval. The House gave the program its nod in 1982, but the Senate, caught up in debates over the MX missile and the gasoline tax, dropped Payment-in-Kind from consideration after one senator threatened a filibuster. Undaunted, President Reagan and Secretary Block proceeded with the program, invoking the Agriculture Act of 1949, which allows the Secretary of Agriculture to make land-diversion payments to farmers.

Their goal was to raise sagging prices and reduce the government's surplus, since storage and price-support costs had become unmanageable. By idling some 50 million acres of land nationwide, PIK would help farmers, reasoned the U.S.D.A., reducing their need for costly agricultural supplies (fertilizers, herbicides, machinery) while providing them with crops to sell. The program has increased prices and reduced surpluses as the government intended, but at a much higher price to the taxpayers than other farm programs and without helping the farmers who need it most.

One reason for PIK's high cost and skewed benefits is the lack of a limit on payments. Under the legislation governing traditional subsidy programs, farmers may not receive more than $50,000 in cash; however, Agriculture officials ignored that limit with PIK, figuring it would not apply to payments in the form of commodities. Consequently, National Farms, a huge Nebraska agribusiness owned by Prudential Insurance, received $3.46 million worth of corn from PIK, and Zumwalt Farms of Colusa, California, harvested $2.2 million in rice from the government's granaries.

Cotton farmers have cashed in the most. Last November,

Theresa Braine, a former Nation *intern, is senior copy editor of* Sylvia Porter's Personal Finance Magazine.

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upon California Representative Fortney Stark's request, the General Accounting Office released the results of a survey of 708 farms participating in the PIK program. One of the ten largest PIK subsidies went to South Lake Farms of Fresno, California. South Lake is owned by Bangor Punta Corporation (worth over $600 billion) and is operated by Producers Cotton Oil, "the largest processor of cotton in the Western United States," according to its annual report. In 1981 Producers Cotton showed record operating profits of $13.9 million. Last year it received almost $2.5 million in cash subsidies and PIK commodities.

The average family farm, however, wasn't so lucky. PIK isn't geared to the needs of such farms, says Marty Strange, co-director of the Center for Rural Affairs. Instead of specializing in one cash-producing commodity, as agribusinesses do, they usually grow a number of different crops, so PIK has been only marginally helpful to them. Likewise, it has been largely irrelevant to conservation-conscious farmers who have diversified their crops to protect against soil erosion.

The large handouts prompted Representative Stark and the California Rural Legal Assistance Organization to file suit against the U.S.D.A. in Federal District Court last winter. The suit aimed to prevent the department from waiving the subsidy limit again. It was dropped this summer, after the U.S.D.A. announced that the $50,000 limit would apply to PIK in 1984.

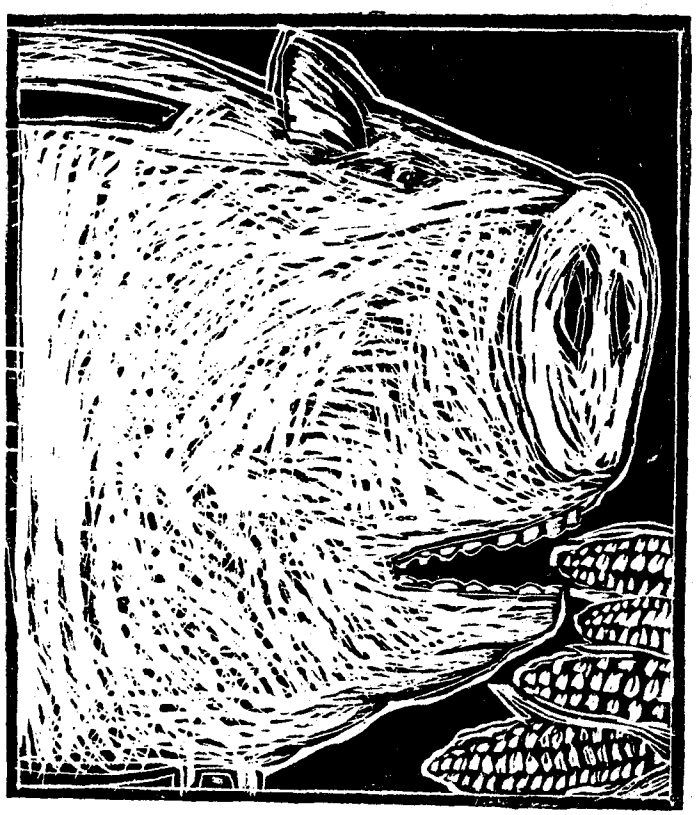
Huge interstate grain handling and storage companies are also cashing in on PIK. The U.S.D.A. contracts with those companies so it can fulfill its PIK obligations in areas of the country where government supplies are deficient. If a Tennessee farmer is owed wheat, for example, but the government doesn't have enough stored in that state, it contracts with a storage company there to provide the farmer's PIK entitlement. In return, the government gives the company title to wheat stored in another part of the country, as well as some extra wheat as a fee. Under that arrangement, conglomerates like Cargill, a huge processing and shipping company based in Minnesota, have reaped millions of dollars in commodities.

According to *The Washington Post*, those companies are charging farmers service fees, or "out" charges, even though under PIK the government is supposed to pay all storage and handling expenses for up to five months. Unmindful of the program's stipulations, Grant Buntrock of the U.S.D.A. told me that the government's responsibility ends when the farmer claims a PIK entitlement.

Catherine Lerza, associate director of the Washington-based Rural Coalition, and others connected with organizations representing small farmers and low-income rural people have characterized PIK as a case of "them that has, gets." The major injustice, says Strange, is that PIK rewards the type of farming that causes surpluses in the first place. Since a farmer's PIK benefits are based on how much the farm previously produced, farmers with irrigation systems and capital-intensive methods receive more crops per idle acre than farmers with fewer resources. The program has also penalized small farmers: for instance, those who grow corn and also use it to feed their livestock. Because those farmers need all their crop—not the 80 percent promised by PIK—they had no reason to participate in the program. Then when last year's severe drought destroyed their crop, they not only incurred a loss but were forced to buy corn for feed at the inflated market prices. And according to Strange, PIK—not the drought—had the greatest effect on those prices in most areas.

Farmers are not the only ones suffering. As growers participating in PIK have cut back on equipment purchases, agricultural supply firms have lost business. Last October, for example, combine sales were 30 percent below their October 1982 level. Suppliers thought sales would increase at the end of 1983, when farmers received their windfall from the sale of PIK commodities, but instead farmers used the proceeds to pay off debts. Consumers, too, are feeling the PIK pinch, as food prices rise. The 49 percent reduction in the corn crop from 1982 to 1983 has already driven up meat prices, and prices of other foods will rise about 4 to 7 percent before the year is out, according to *The New York Times*.

It is not altogether surprising that the Reagan Administration chose a farm subsidy strategy aimed at improving the overall statistical image of the farm economy, without making fundamental improvements and without meeting the needs of individual farmers. But even on its own terms, PIK doesn't make much sense. A study conducted last year by an agricultural subcommittee of the House Committee on Government Operations documented the U.S.D.A.'s lack of foresight and its slipshod economic analysis in relation to PIK. At a Congressional hearing, economists testified that Secretary Block in some cases approved farm programs that



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defied economic logic, projecting larger surpluses and higher prices at the same time. Eric Wailes, professor of agricultural economics at the University of Arkansas, told the subcommittee that the plan Block chose for the 1982 rice crop was based on the prediction that carry-over stocks would be higher in 1983 than they were in 1982 and that the expected average season price would also be higher. That error underestimated government costs by $200 million, according to Professor Wailes.

In July 1983, Block was considering two programs for wheat. One assumed a season average price of $3.35 per bushel and a surplus of 558 million bushels, while the other was based on a projected price of $3.30 per bushel and a surplus of 513 million bushels. Block selected the program that promised farmers higher prices *and* higher surpluses, ignoring one of the basic tenets of economics.

PIK itself was based on two faulty premises: that the commodities being given away were worth nothing and that PIK would reduce direct cash subsidies to growers. The Agriculture Department rationalized that since there was no way to determine exactly the eventual selling price of the commodities, or in what form they would be sold (the price of corn used as feed, for example, would be translated into the price of beef), there was no way to place a market value on them. Block also reasoned that because of low market prices as well as spoilage and storage costs, the commodities represented a net loss. In fact, giving away the commodities cost the government $9 billion, according to the G.A.O. report. That is what the U.S.D.A. had estimated PIK would save in storage and price-support costs between 1984 and 1986. The actual value of the commodities could be as high as $12 billion, according to *The Wall Street Journal*.

PIK is expensive for other reasons as well. In its first year it turned out to be the largest land set-aside program in U.S. history. Having expected that, at most, 50 million acres would lie fallow, Block was overjoyed when PIK and other farm programs idled 80 million acres, about 38 percent of U.S. cropland. Thus more land than ever required price supports. Unlike up-front cash subsidies, the cost of PIK is not figured as a budgetary outlay. The main reason for this is the nature of the payment. Commodities distributed through PIK in 1983 were made available largely because farmers (even some who were participating in the program) had put them up as collateral for government loans—loans which do not come due until 1984 or 1985. Given the general state of the farm economy, however, it is widely expected that those loans will not be paid back. Thus rather than going down as a 1983 expenditure, the cost will show up as a loss in the two subsequent years. Fortunately for Reagan, the expense will not be apparent until after the election.

Still, the Administration has recognized that PIK is not working. This year the program has been implemented only for wheat, as that is the one commodity of which there remains an overwhelming surplus. Participating farmers may now set aside no more than 50 percent of their wheat acreage for PIK and regular price-support programs combined. In addition, farmers will have to "plant for PIK." They are required to grow a crop and take out a loan with the crop as

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collateral; they will get the collateral back as PIK payment. In effect, the government is paying farmers to grow the surplus that it will then use as a price support to offset the effects of large farm surpluses. (This was conceived in 1983, when the government realized it wasn't going to have enough commodities to meet its PIK obligations.) There is also a $50,000 ceiling on all payments, including the value of the commodities to be given out.

The Reagan Administration has tried to solve the farm subsidy problem with an expensive and ineffective program that enmeshes it in a new Big Government tangle. Down on the farm, as elsewhere, the Administration caters to the rich while ignoring the needs of the poor. □

Father Carney

(*Continued From Front Cover*)

rilla presence. Other troubling questions remained. Why was Reyes Mata's body not produced for the Honduran tabloids, which clamor incessantly for corpses? And what of Father Carney? Where were the witnesses to his death?

The first person to comment on the missing facts was the soft-spoken Superior of the Jesuits in Honduras, the Spanish-born Rev. José María (Chema) Tojeira, whose doubts coincided with those of the Carney family in the United States. The family began an investigation, making two trips to Honduras and keeping up a stream of telephone calls and letters to the State Department. They grew restive, however, at the reluctance of American officials to challenge the Honduran military's version of the events. After his first trip to Tegucigalpa, Carney's brother-in-law, St. Louis psychologist Joe Connolly, confided to us, "I think there is a real chance that the United States is up to its neck in this."

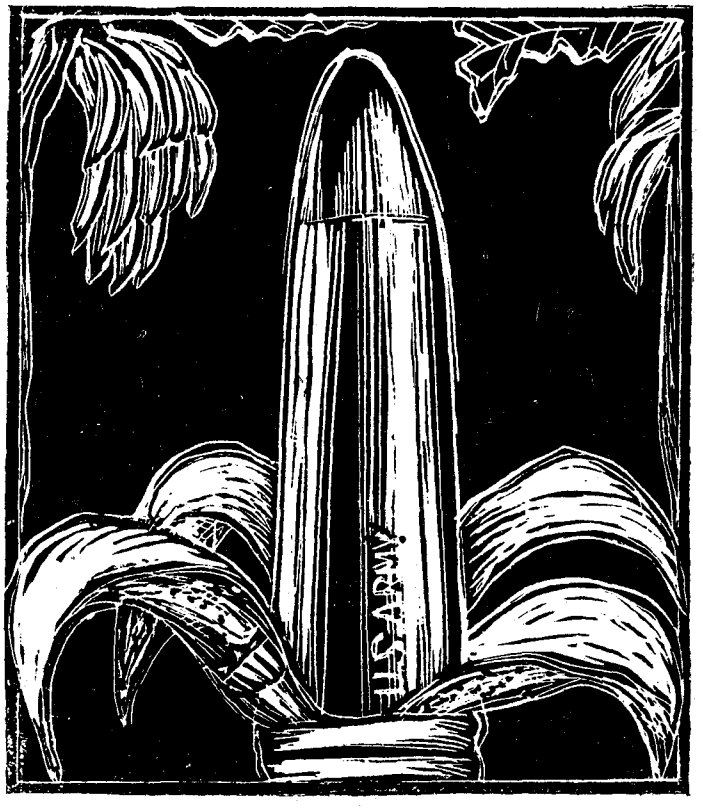
Our investigation leads us to believe that Connolly's fears were well founded. There is compelling evidence that U.S. officials played along with an elaborate Honduran cover-up of the facts. Worse, there are strong suggestions that U.S. intelligence and military personnel took part in the Honduran combat operations and may have been present when Father Carney died.

Father Carney's family had learned to live with the possibility of his death. He had spoken often enough of its likelihood and was the first to admit that his direct and plain-spoken attachment to liberation theology had won him few friends among either the Catholic hierarchy or the Honduran military.

His first Honduran parish, in 1964, was the run-down banana and railroad town of El Progreso, one of those mockingly named outposts that abound in Central America. He lived with an austerity that startled even his Jesuit superiors, leading one fellow missionary to recall that working with Carney "was like being with Jesus Christ." For fifteen years Carney defied the military. He worked with the national peasant union, ANACH, until 1979, when the military regime decided it had had enough, stripped him of the Honduran citizenship he had acquired in 1973 and threw him out of the country. Carney wound up in revolutionary Nicaragua, where he worked closely with the Maryknoll Sisters and became parish priest of San Juan de Limay; but he fretted about getting back to Honduras, which he continued to regard as home.

Eventually Carney found a way to return—as unofficial chaplain on a mission of the Revolutionary Party of Central American Workers-Honduras (PRTC-H). In the alphabet soup of Central American rebel groups it was relatively small and obscure, but in Honduras, even a small group can make a splash. By early 1983, José María Reyes Mata was in Managua as supreme commander of the PRTC-H, planning to drive a column into eastern Honduras and form a base of peasant support to start the Honduran revolution. As PRTC-H propaganda made clear, the rebels would have to contend with four armies—the Honduran, the Salvadoran (receiving U.S. training at Puerto Castilla, Honduras), the American and the *contra*. It was a bizarre and hapless exercise for just ninety-six men.

The 40-year-old Reyes Mata had fought with Che Guevara's National Liberation Army in Bolivia, which made him a minor legend to some Central American leftists, an outdated crank to others. As a strategist, he still had one foot planted in the *foquismo* of the 1960s, a theory which



George Black is editor of NACLA's Report on the Americas *and author of two books on Central America. Anne Nelson, who has covered Central America and the Caribbean for* The Nation *and the* Los Angeles Times *since 1980, conducted additional research for this article. Black and Nelson produced a documentary on the Carney case for the BBC which aired in March.*

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called for isolated bands of guerrillas to disappear into the wilds to spark revolution. The Sandinistas, by now hard-pressed by the C.I.A.-backed *contras*, had mixed feelings about his adventure. Some may have given him limited support, but most discouraged the PRTC-H operation.

On or around July 19, 1983 (the fourth anniversary of the Nicaraguan revolution), the Sandinista military must have looked the other way as Reyes Mata's guerrillas crossed a major war zone in full battle gear and made their way to Honduran soil. Accompanying them was Father Guadalupe Carney. Survivors of the band say Father Carney and Reyes Mata argued continually as they trudged up and down the forested hillsides. Reyes Mata, ever dogmatic in his Marxism, argued that the celebration of mass had no place in a guerrilla war; Carney, the liberation theologian, insisted that a priest was needed to minister to the guerrillas' spiritual needs.

What actually happened during the next two months? There is little in the story the army told at Nueva Palestina that can be independently verified. On August 1, guerrilla survivors and military sources agree, two deserters turned themselves in to the army at Catacamas and revealed the whereabouts of the column, which by that time had established its base camp, code-named Congolón. By August 4, an army counterinsurgency unit had set up headquarters at Nueva Palestina. In the next four weeks, the army says, it tracked down the guerrillas in the mountains of the Cordillera Entre Ríos.

In the rugged terrain east of Nueva Palestina, the army claims, it engaged the rebels in a series of four firefights. The first was on August 28; subsequent ones occurred on September 3 and 11. The last, in which Reyes Mata supposedly died, took place between 5 P.M. and 7 P.M. on September 18. By 10 o'clock the next morning, the army was ready to break the big news at the Nueva Palestina press conference. It was a skillful diversionary exercise—what Hondurans, at a loss for a precise Spanish term, call "*un show.*"

But the army's account is challenged by local journalists. On September 14, families of Honduran soldiers had told one reporter for Radio América that Reyes Mata was in custody, alive. Manuel Gamero, editor of the Tegucigalpa daily *Tiempo*, recalls that the army invited him to Nueva Palestina for the press conference around 2 P.M. on September 18—several hours before the death it was called to announce allegedly took place. The army's version is also contradicted by information gleaned from a five-hour interview we had with PRTC-H survivors. The specific details of their story tally strikingly with accounts from local church and human rights sources.

The guerrillas admit that their forces were in deep trouble from the moment the first two deserters broke ranks on August 1. Within days, the group's leaders learned from the radio that their location was known. Nueva Palestina is the only village in the area, and by August 4 it was occupied by troops of the Patuca Task Force. That cut the guerrillas off from their food supply.

Almost immediately, Reyes Mata decided to break up the Congolón camp. While one group, which included Father Carney, stayed close to Nueva Palestina, a second headed north along the Patuca River. On August 28, an army patrol located the Reyes Mata-Carney group, and a single firefight ensued. The group was by that time in dreadful physical shape, subsisting on jungle vegetation, according to survivors. By September 4, the straggling remnants of that group had been tracked down.

That day, armed forces commander Gen. Gustavo Alvarez Martínez arrived in Nueva Palestina to take charge. On September 5 local residents reported the arrival at El Aguacate air base of a large helicopter carrying Alvarez. During August, Nicaraguan *contras* had begun to use El Aguacate as a supply depot, and U.S. Army engineers had moved in to extend the dirt airstrip to 8,000 feet. That task brought well-paid work to a number of impoverished local men. In early September two of them told their families that they had seen a number of prisoners brought to El Aguacate under guard. Among them was a man they recognized from photographs in the newspapers as José María Reyes Mata. Soldiers soon warned the workmen not to talk anymore.

The task of Alvarez and other interrogators at El Aguacate was clear: to locate the second PRTC-H column, which had eluded the Nueva Palestina dragnet. They must have broken the prisoners efficiently, for on the same day a second task force was dispatched to the village of Río Tinto, ten miles northeast of El Aguacate and sixty miles northeast of Nueva Palestina. According to the PRTC-H, guerrilla units clashed with the army on September 7, 11, 16 and 20 at various points along a small jungle tributary, the Wasparasni, and in the chain of hills called the Montañas de Capapán. At least sixteen guerrillas died.

Some were taken prisoner: among them, Armando Moncada, Oswaldo Castro and José Rafael Duarte, the three presented as deserters at the September 19 Nueva Palestina press show. They too were interned and interrogated at El Aguacate. They cannot confirm the exact date of their capture, for all three are now dead.

U.S. intelligence personnel were fully involved in the Honduran Army's operation. In a letter to the Carney family dated December 7, 1983, the State Department explained:

> According to the Honduran government, it first knew of the guerrillas on August 1st when two deserters appeared in Catacamas. It shared this information with the U.S. Defense Attaché's office. During the Honduran military's operation against the guerrillas, the U.S. Defense Attaché assisted in debriefing the guerrillas.

That admission means U.S. intelligence personnel had seven weeks to interrogate the detainees. Yet the letter claims that only after the Nueva Palestina press conference did the embassy realize that Father Carney, a U.S. citizen, had been with the guerrillas. How could the interrogations have possibly failed to elicit that information?

Congress has an explicit understanding with the Administration that U.S. forces on maneuvers in Honduras will not be present in combat zones. Nevertheless, the U.S. Southern Command admits that 150 American troops, most of them

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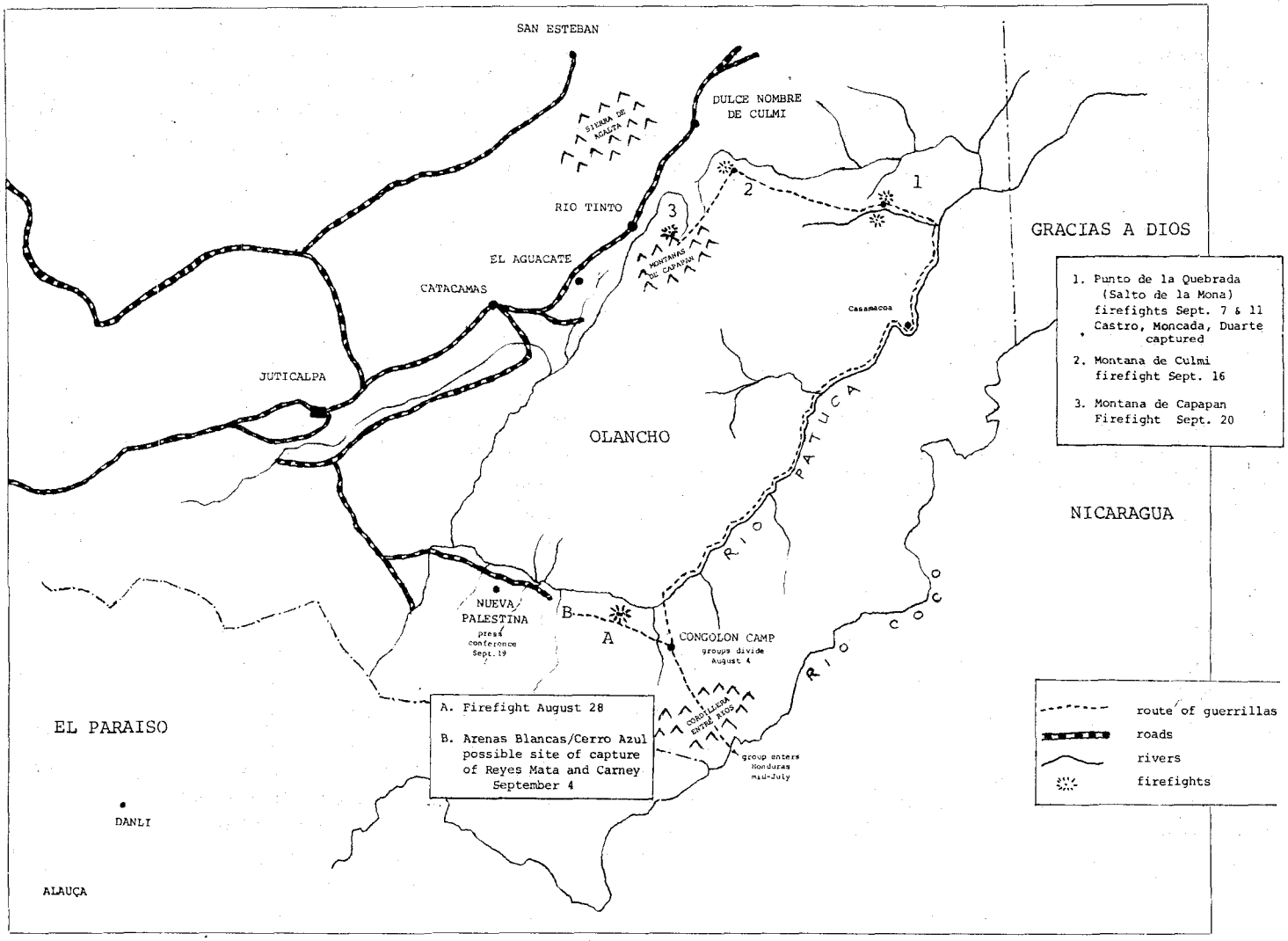
Army Rangers from Fort Lewis, Washington, were parachuted into Olancho on August 5. They stayed until August 16, engaging in what the Pentagon called a "simulated counterinsurgency operation" with Honduran forces. August 5 was the day after the Honduran Army's Patuca Task Force arrived in Olancho on its real counterinsurgency mission.

On September 9, five UH-60 Blackhawk helicopters of the 101st Airborne Division were spotted moving suspiciously in eastern Honduras, according to U.S. news reports between September 20 and 28. American officers close to the operation told CBS News on September 20 that "the Blackhawks were transporting Honduran troops into the combat area and running reconnaissance flights for them." The Pentagon denied that report and claimed the choppers were bringing food supplies for refugees, presumably Miskito Indians from Nicaragua. But on September 27, Col. James Strachan, public affairs officer in Tegucigalpa for the U.S. Southern Command, told the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* that U.S. helicopters had, in fact, provided transport for Honduran counterinsurgency troops on September 9. He took pains to point out, however, that they had no connection with the fighting around Nueva Palestina, which, he said, was in an entirely different location.

The State Department did not provide a precise account of the Blackhawk incident until it dispatched its letter to the Carney family in December:

> On September 9th, five U.S. helicopters transported 50 Honduran troops from Dulsuna to a location north east of Dulce Nombre de Culmí. . . . [They] were also authorized to carry out the Honduran government's request that Honduran 5th Battalion soldiers be transported . . . to prevent the guerrillas from escaping along the lower Patuca river to the Mosquitia region. These Honduran soldiers did not participate in combat activity against the guerrillas.

As Strachan had, the letter stressed that the U.S. soldiers "were 150 kilometers distant from the Cordillera Entre Ríos region in Olancho where the skirmishes took place"—or at least where the Honduran Army *says* they took place. That version of events exonerates U.S. forces from charges of direct combat involvement in September, but its accuracy is suspect. The guerrillas' story of battles along the Wasparasni River and in the Capapán area places the 101st Airborne Division in the middle of the combat area. Dulce Nombre de Culmí, at the northern end of the Capapán area, is the next town up the road from El Aguacate and Río Tinto, where a second Honduran Army task force began operating on September 5. That date is important. The Blackhawks flew their mission on September 9, just two days after the guerrillas say they were first engaged in battle on



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the Wasparasni. The precise spot, known as the Salto de la Mona, is, as the Pentagon says, almost 150 kilometers northeast of Nueva Palestina.

One senior Honduran military officer who is close to General Alvarez and who has insisted on anonymity assigns an even greater role to the helicopters. U.S. military advisers, he says, played a command and control role in the counterinsurgency sweep, relaying information by radio to ground troops.

Perhaps most serious, there are strong suggestions that U.S. personnel involved with the Nicaraguan *contras* may have taken part in events leading up to the death in custody of Father Carney and other prisoners.

The Carney family arrived in Tegucigalpa on September 28. On September 30 and October 4, they met with all but six of the imprisoned survivors of the PRTC-H guerrilla column, hoping that someone might be able to shed light on Carney's death. The long interview sessions yielded little hard information.

On their return to the United States, the family wrote to General Alvarez, asking, among other questions, why they had been allowed to meet with only fifteen of the twenty-one guerrilla survivors. His reply, dated November 11, was illuminating; he explained that those six detainees

> were participating during those days in patrol operations with the Patuca Task Force, as guides to find arms caches. To our surprise, these individuals, in whom much confidence had been placed, tried to escape as a group at dawn on October 3, 1983, . . . causing a skirmish in which they lost their lives.

The letter gave no names. Meanwhile, for almost two months, the anxious families of the missing detainees had pressed the army to explain why their visiting rights had been canceled. Finally, on November 25, the army gave the Honduran press an official identification of three of the men who had been "shot trying to escape." They were Moncada, Castro and Duarte, the "deserters" presented at the Nueva Palestina press conference. The three may have been prevented from telling the Carney family what they knew, but the army failed to silence them completely. Castro had talked to his relatives during a prison visit, and his testimony about what he had learned at El Aguacate was smuggled out to the Christian Human Rights Commission of Honduras, in Olancho, which released it at a press conference in Mexico City in early October.

According to the document, El Aguacate was a C.I.A.-Nicaraguan Democratic Force headquarters, and Castro knew names:

> In that place, the North American advisers Lieutenant West Blank and Major Mark Kelvi [*sic*] have been identified. . . . These North Americans were directly involved in the torture and interrogation, which culminated in the cowardly murder of the priest James Carney (Father Guadalupe) and of other revolutionary leaders. These actions, executed in the middle of September, took place in two secret underground cells which function in the fort of El Aguacate, where the FDN also stores war materiel supplied by the CIA. General Gustavo Alvarez Martínez participated directly in various interrogation sessions before the prisoners were killed.

Later events confirmed the role of El Aguacate as an important base for the *contras*. On October 3, an ancient DC-3 carrying supplies from El Aguacate to F.D.N. rebels crashed—or was shot down—over the Nicaraguan province of Jinotega. Hugo Reynaldo Aguilar Méndez, co-pilot of the DC-3 and former captain in the National Guard of Anastasio Somoza Debayle, told a Managua press conference that El Aguacate—known by the code-name Lobo Loco ("Crazy Wolf")—was shared during August and September by F.D.N. forces, C.I.A. operatives and Honduran infantry troops on a counterinsurgency mission in Olancho.

Aguilar said that his work had brought him in frequent contact with senior U.S. intelligence agents at the base, though he knew only their first names. He identified the top C.I.A. agent at El Aguacate as a man named West, "heavily built, with a tough character," about 55 years old. Aguilar said that West held the rank of major, though the plane's pilot, former National Guard Maj. Roberto Amador, thought he was a colonel. They agreed that West spoke little or no Spanish and that the C.I.A. was planning to replace him with a "Tex-Mex." Aguilar and Amador identified West's second-in-command at El Aguacate as a man in his mid-20s named Mark, whose nickname was El Huesito ("Little Bone"). No further evidence has come to light about the C.I.A. presence at El Aguacate, and U.S. officials decline to make any comment on it.

And so the family of Father James Carney still has no certain knowledge of how he died. Nor may they ever. U.S. Ambassador to Honduras John Dimitri Negroponte suggests that the family begin looking for him in Nicaragua, where the rebel drive started. In an interview in February, the Ambassador insisted, "We have been asked to find out what has happened to a U.S. citizen, and that is what we are doing." But Ambassador Negroponte's position as overseer of the Reagan Administration's "secret" war does not allow him even to acknowledge the existence of many of the circumstances that surround Carney's death. Their ultimate revelation could be the stubborn priest's last service to his adopted country. □

FOOTNOTE ON AN HISTORIC CASE: IN RE ALGER HISS

This just-published booklet by author William A. Reuben identifies 114 factual errors in the Federal District Court of New York's 1982 decision upholding Hiss's conviction for perjury in 1950. This flawed decision, upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1983, stands as the last legal word on one of the most celebrated cases in modern history. 1 copy $5, 10 copies $40, 50 copies $150, 100 copies $250. Make checks payable to The Nation Institute and send to "Hiss," The Nation Institute, 72 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10011.

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BOOKS & THE ARTS.

Forever in Galleys

MAUREEN QUILLIGAN

TIRANT LO BLANC. *By Joanot Martorell and Martí Joan de Galba. Translated by David H. Rosenthal. Schocken. 642 pp. $21.95.*

Anyone who has ever seen a book touted with a quote of theirs carefully excised from a fairly unenthusiastic review will know what Don Miguel de Cervantes may be feeling right now. Schocken Books is publicizing its new translation of *Tirant lo Blanc*, a chivalric romance first published in Catalan in 1490, with a blurb by Cervantes hailing it as "the best book in the world." Those words are in print, and Cervantes did write them; they are spoken not by Cervantes but by the Curate in the famous book-burning scene in Part I of *Don Quixote*. The Curate and the Barber have decided to cure Don Quixote of his book-inspired mania for chivalry by burning all those nonsensical, rubbishy romances he has been reading. They toss the books out the library window into the yard, where a literary auto-da-fé awaits them. When the housekeeper drops a volume and the Curate stoops to pick it up, he recognizes an old favorite of his, *Tirant lo Blanc*, which he stops to praise:

> In the matter of style this is the best book in the world. Here knights eat and sleep and die in their beds and make their wills before they die and do other things that are never heard of in books of this kind. But for all that, I am telling you that the one who needlessly composed so nonsensical a work deserves to be sent to the galleys for the rest of his life.

That passage is taken from Samuel Putnam's translation of *Don Quixote*. In the introduction to his translation of *Tirant lo Blanc*, David H. Rosenthal renders the last sentence differently:

> For all that and because he avoided deliberate nonsense, the author deserved to have it kept in print all his life.

Rosenthal's interpretation is legitimate, but it loses Cervantes's huge pun (in Castilian and—*Deo gratias*—English, "galleys" means both "slave ships" and "printed pages"), and thus his ambivalence: for their efforts, the authors of *Tirant lo Blanc*, Joanot Martorell and Martí Joan de Galba, deserved either to labor as slaves, or to remain in print, or a little of both. The conflict in Cervantes's view of *Tirant* admirably reflects, in fact, his shifting attitude throughout *Don Quixote*. Is the Don a mad fool for believing in chivalry, or a great idealist, living out the impossible dream against all odds, or a little of both? Was Cervantes a Sancho Panza, or the Knight of Woeful Countenance, or a little of both?

Written more than 100 years before *Don Quixote*, *Tirant lo Blanc* does not set its hero tilting at windmills. Its dragon is a real fire-snorter (even if the beast turns out to be a disguised damsel under a hex). Saracen hordes really are Saracen hordes, and princesses real princesses who feel real erotic passion for the really chivalric hero. The gore is glorious, the love sexy and the action continuous. *Tirant lo Blanc* has a stronger narrative drive than *Quixote*, which, as readers often forget, is continually interrupted by interpolated tales which often seem quite beside the point. Rosenthal keeps the plot of *Tirant* moving apace, but fast action cannot, of course, make a book into a masterpiece. Less elegiac and heroic than its British counterpart and contemporary, Malory's *Morte d'Arthur*, *Tirant* nevertheless has flavorful Mediterranean zest that distinguishes it from many of the stolid prose romances tossed on that bonfire in La Mancha. But it is not, alas, a brilliant work of art. It does not belong at the round table with Sidney's *Arcadia*, or Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*, or Cervantes's *Don Quixote*.

Tirant lo Blanc tells the saga of Tirant, a Breton knight who is initiated into the mysteries of chivalry in England by the exemplary William of Warwick, a ruler who takes the ritual blooding of the neophite soldier seriously:

> The king seized the boy's hair and flung him on the infidel. He kept him there until the boy's face was covered with gore and made him stick his hands inside the wounds, thus baptizing his son in infidel blood.

The narrative gallops through numerous extremely bloody jousts and wars in England, moves on to adventures in Sicily and Rhodes and is then off to Constantinople, where Tirant finds the aging Byzantine emperor besieged by Moslem invaders. While there fighting off the enemy by various tricky and (some say) underhanded stratagems, Tirant falls in love with the emperor's daughter, Carmesina, an exquisite and delicate damsel extremely chary of her chastity. So chary, in fact, that it takes Tirant three separate sieges nude abed with his lady before he is able to rape her (as chivalric custom, here slightly revised, demands). In this delayed conquest—which consumes some 300 pages—Tirant is abetted by a lady-in-waiting named Pleasure-of-my-life, who is one of Cervantes's Curate's favorite characters, as well as a distant cousin of Chaucer's bawdy Wife of Bath. To punish Tirant for his sexual fears, Pleasure-of-my-life leaves the heroic slayer of Saracens panicked and whispering for help, standing naked in the dark in his lady's bedroom.

While *Tirant lo Blanc* can be hospitable to such Boccaccian or Chaucerian humor, it takes its chivalry with unalloyed high seriousness and demonstrates the martial mayhem its hero can wreak on infidel armies again and again and again. In these battles, Tirant is utterly without blemish, as perfect in grace and courtesy as he is in slaughter.

Chivalry is one of those things in history that is always dying, just as the middle class is always rising; in *Tirant*, the decadence of "modern" 1490s chivalry is only a setting to show off the jewel of Tirant's attainment of the ideal. Where then, one might ask, is the deflating realism that *Quixote*'s Curate praises? While the entire setting of *Don Quixote* aims at exploring the disjunction between the ideals of chivalry and early modern Spanish mercantile society, the realism of *Tirant* lies in dependent clauses within dependent clauses, in the verisimilitude of parenthetical details rather than in the authors' attitude toward the subject. Thus, of a ceremonial moment, the narrator points out, "A long, red velvet carpet was laid from the platform to the gangway, and

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since once Tirant had passed, anyone could take a piece, many people's hands were cut by swords and knives as they tried to grab their shares." Such attention to the real and particular is admirable but, unlike in *Don Quixote*, it is unassimilated and at (unconscious) odds with the tone of the book as a whole. Nonetheless, *Tirant* obviously piqued Cervantes's interest, and if it stimulated him in any way to write *Don Quixote*, the world must be thankful.

Whether the knight Tirant and his princess, Carmesina, will enter the lists of world-class lovers—as David Rosenthal apparently hopes—joining the likes of Troilus and Criseyde, Tristan and Isolde, Arthur and Guinevere (or even *hende* Nicholas and Alisoun of Chaucer's "Miller's Tale"), remains doubtful. But they and the ladies in the tale, who insist that petting be only "from the waist up," do offer authentic medieval entertainment with a dash of modern "realism." And because of them, *Tirant* may afford us the same pleasure La Mancha's Curate found in it: "A treasure of contentment and a mine of recreation." It's not likely that Cervantes thought *Tirant lo Blanc* the best book in the world, but like the modern Gothic equivalents of the old chivalric romances, it is a real page-turner. □

Dangerously Wonderful

MICHAEL HENRY HEIM

THE ENGINEER OF HUMAN SOULS. *By Josef Skvorecky. Alfred A. Knopf. 571 pp. $17.95.*

Ours is a time of massive migration. In the works of some of the century's greatest writers—Conrad, Joyce, Nabokov, Beckett—the sense of loss and displacement that comes from leaving native soil acquires general significance: it represents a modern everyman's clichéd but nonetheless substantial sense of alienation. Josef Skvorecky, a prominent Czech novelist, essayist and translator who left his homeland after the 1968 Soviet invasion, is no Pollyanna, but he has something refreshingly positive to say about the fate of the emigrant and perhaps, by extension, about our provisionally alienated everyman. His latest novel, *The Engineer of Human Souls*, is not merely a medium for this message; it is to some extent the message itself. For Skvorecky is one of those rare birds who still believes in the connection between literature and life.

To begin with, Skvorecky's novel boasts the subtitle "An Entertainment on the Old Themes of Life, Women, Fate, Dreams, the Working Class, Secret Agents, Love and Death." And in fact it swings effortlessly back and forth between the hilarious and the serious, the randy and the chaste. The plot it all hangs on is simple enough. The time is the mid-1970s, the place, Toronto. Daniel Smiricky, the first-person narrator, is a middle-aged professor of American literature who was a prominent novelist, essayist and translator in his native Czechoslovakia before the Soviet invasion of 1968. While working his way through a semester of Poe, Hawthorne, Twain, Crane, Conrad and Fitzgerald, he falls in love with his brightest and most beautiful student, to whom he then gives private lessons in Lovecraft (H.P.). At the same time, he takes an active part in the city's Czech community, sharing in the triumphs and tragedies of its denizens' precarious balance between assimilation and ethnic identity.

Although Smiricky's two worlds often commingle on the level of plot, they all but converge in their ability to call forth memories. In *The Engineer of Human Souls*, memories form several separate but parallel story lines: Danny's teen-age life and loves as a conscripted laborer during the Nazi occupation; Daniel's life and loves as a "bourgeois element" during the early years of the Communist regime; and the experiences of various of his friends—related here primarily through personal letters—during the Stalinist 1950s, the liberal 1960s and the "normalized" 1970s. "Associations—the essence of everything," Smiricky muses. "Associations in time, in appearance, in theory, in the heart, omnipotent and omnipresent."

Within the context of the novel these associations take on a new dimension. When Smiricky free-associates, he links his pre-emigration and postemigration lives, re-establishing contact with himself. The move from Czechoslovakia to Canada is no final rift; it is a new stage in the same life. Not surprisingly, Smiricky is a conservative, but he is one in the etymological sense of the word: he has a strong need to conserve what he feels to be worthwhile, and he accordingly counsels the West to pay closer attention to the past. Released from the burden of the "scientific"—that is, Marxist—world view, he feels "dangerously wonderful" in Canada, *dangerously* because he recognizes the jeopardy involved in going too far in the direction of "unscientific" hedonism: of letting everything lose meaning by living life only for itself. As he points out when discussing the Costa Gavras film *The Confession* with one of his students—a certain Wendy McFarlane from Horseman's Saddle, Ontario—"her experience comes chiefly from television, mine from the European *teatrum mundi*." For these students *The Confession*, which deals with the very real purges and show trials of the early 1950s in Czechoslovakia, is just another movie. "In their brief lives they had seen hundreds like it. Barnaby Jones punches people's teeth out, Kojak gives the third degree, Cannon beats heads against the wall."

Their naïveté (and, by extension, the naïveté of the West) encompasses culture in general and especially Smiricky's great love, literature. "I despaired," he continues, "for those legions of students who are taught American Literature by someone from Harvard who, lecturing on the function of colour in *The Scarlet Letter*, deals only with the function of colour in *The Scarlet Letter*. I suppose for them, for all of them, it will always be just a movie. Until the fall of the Western world." Smiricky takes literature seriously. When Hawthorne asks, "Cannot you conceive that a man may wish well to the world, and struggle for its good, on some other plan than precisely that which you have laid down?" Smiricky applies the question to the ideology he has lived under. And when Hawthorne's Hollingsworth calls mankind "but another yoke of oxen, stubborn, stupid and sluggish," waiting to be goaded, Smiricky sees Hollingsworth as a preincarnation of Lenin and his "method of scientifically exploiting false consciousness." Later, when discussing Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* with the class, he sets forth a

Michael Henry Heim teaches Czech and Russian literature at the University of California, Los Angeles. His translation of Milan Kundera's The Unbearable Lightness of Being *(Harper & Row) appeared this spring.*

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detailed analysis of the work as a prescient vision of Soviet society.

Of course, Smiricky has no intention of forcing his interpretations on the students. He wishes to show them how literature, real literature, deals in images and ideas that go beyond the immediate issues; he wishes to encourage them to apply what they read to their own lives. By the end of the novel he seems to be making progress even with an American draft resister; in one of his associative flashbacks, the American falls together with a Czech secret service man who once upbraided Smiricky for singing "Annie Laurie" immediately after the "Internationale."

The Engineer of Human Souls is an intensely literary work. The title itself is a tongue-in-cheek reference to Stalin's definition of the writer: "As an engineer constructs a machine, so must a writer construct the mind of the New Man." Each chapter is named for and discusses the author Professor Smiricky happens to be taking up in class at the time; each is prefaced by a galaxy of epigraphs from Czech, Anglo-American and French literature. And many of the Czech characters in the novel—notably the narrator, Daniel Smiricky, and the characters he summons up by association or by letter—have appeared before in Skvorecky's works. They thus not only refer to other works; they owe their very existence to them.

Skvorecky's first novel, *The Cowards*, is seminal in this process. Written just after the war, it could not be published in Czechoslovakia until 1958, and even then it caused an immediate scandal: Danny and his pals in provincial, wartime Kostelec were more concerned with American saxophonists than Soviet liberators, and although they sabotaged munitions in the plants where their German overlords forced them to work, they did so as much to play up to their girls as to bring down the Reich. "There was so much to remember about Kostelec," Smiricky/Skvorecky thinks years later in Canada, as he incorporates the gang's new adventures into *The Engineer of Human Souls* and brings their stories up to date. The result is a rich, multilayered narrative that juggles an amazing variety of characters and events with admirable clarity and finesse.

In a sense, then, the novel belongs equally to Czech and to Canadian literature. (Special praise is due Paul Wilson for a stunning translation that perfectly

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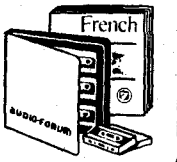

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matches the verve and ebullience of Skvorecky's style.) On the one hand, it is the high point of one side of Skvorecky's prodigious Czech output and shows him at his sparkling best; on the other, it places him in the forefront of the cultural life of the new, "ethnic" Canada, which has acknowledged its gratitude by electing him to the Royal Society and supporting the translation and publication of his novel through the Canada Council and the Ministry of Multiculturalism.

By combining the Czech and Canadian worlds so deftly, by molding them in such a way that they complement each other and work together, Skvorecky demonstrates emblematically, as it were, the *value* of emigration. True, Skvorecky is not the typical émigré; not every émigré has translated James, Faulkner, Hemingway, Hammet, Chandler, Styron and Sillitoe before decamping for parts Anglo-Saxon. Let us say that he represents the ideal case of the émigré who treats his condition as something beyond loss. He has had the wisdom to keep intact the positive values of the society he has left and to join them to the positive values of the society he has adopted.

"I carry my native land in my heart," Smiricky soliloquizes near the end of the novel. "National in form, international in feeling." If he and his maker have come through the ordeal of emigration so unscathed, is it not because they have turned misfortune to advantage by becoming not merely multilingual but multicultural? Literature plays an almost sacral role in *The Engineer of Human Souls*, but Skvorecky insists again and again on the connection between literature and life. He chides a student for dismissing the bullets in Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage* as mere figments of naturalism; he would probably chide us for dismissing any of the injustices and griefs that abound in *The Engineer of Human Souls*. They are real and they are gruesome. And yet we put the novel down with a sense of joy at the plenitude of life. Old-fashioned, perhaps. Against alienation. But surely what we hope for from "An Entertainment on the Old Themes of Life, Women, Fate, Dreams, the Working Class, Secret Agents, Love and Death." □

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Excellent Women

GAIL POOL

A VERY PRIVATE EYE: An Autobiography in Diaries and Letters. *By Barbara Pym. Edited by Hazel Holt and Hilary Pym. E.P. Dutton. 358 pp. $19.95.*

When Barbara Pym died in 1980, little was known of her life beyond the familiar flap-copy story: She published six novels in the 1950s, had her seventh rejected and was thereafter shunned by publishers for some fourteen years. Then, in 1977, she was cited twice in a *Times Literary Supplement* survey as one of the most underrated novelists of the century and was promptly rediscovered. Her early works were reprinted, and she published three new novels to wide critical acclaim. Pym's death followed so closely upon her literary reinstatement that it cast a shadow on this book-jacket fairy tale. But there was still hope that she had been writing during her exile and that we might yet extract from her life the message that Quality is Finally Rewarded and Art Will Out in the End.

A Very Private Eye yields no such soothing message, and Pym enthusiasts will undoubtedly find this book as painful as it is rewarding. Those fourteen years loom large indeed and form the central story of her life. Pym handled her literary rejection with grace, defending herself to herself as best she could; like her own heroines, she came to terms with what life had meted out. But as her journals and letters make clear, the experience hurt her deeply and so undermined her confidence that it hindered her ability to write.

"I don't feel that I can 'improve' *An Unsuitable Attachment* at present; though obviously it could *be* improved," Pym wrote to Philip Larkin, an admirer of her work, in 1963, just after Macmillan had rejected the book. "I haven't the energy to do it and it might still be unacceptable whatever I did to it. Three people who have read it tell me it *isn't* below the standard of my others. (I'm incapable of judging now!)"

Two years later, after Faber had turned it down as well, she wrote in her journal: "Now I feel as if I shall never write again, though perhaps I will eventually. Rather a relief to feel that I don't have to flog myself to finish the present one since probably nothing I write could be acceptable now."

The prolific author who had published six novels between 1950 and 1961 completed only two novels between 1963 and 1977. Moreover, those two (*The Sweet Dove Died* and *Quartet in Autumn*) represent a departure from the wonderfully eccentric Pym world—the comic English village populated by vicars and "excellent women," the spinsters who form the fabric of the church and social life—which she had abandoned as no longer salable, and to which she would return only once, in *A Few Green Leaves*, finished just before she died. Pym's letters show that the final recognition brought great pleasure to her last years, but fame could not bring forth books never written. It is hard to imagine that Pym's admirers, who will most likely form the main audience for *A Very Private Eye*, can reflect on all this without sadness and perhaps, more selfishly, a sense of having been cheated.

But it's fruitless, obviously, to speculate on what Pym might have written. *A Very Private Eye* is, as the editors intended, "another book by Barbara Pym": a collection of her diaries, working notebooks and letters to close friends. The material—selected, chronologically arranged and carefully introduced by Pym's friend Hazel Holt and her sister, Hilary Pym—takes us from the author's first year at Oxford, 1932, to her wartime service in the WRNS, to her life as a novelist, published and unpublished. Despite the book's subtitle, it isn't an autobiography—there are far too many gaps—but that doesn't necessarily diminish it. In the externals, Pym's life doesn't seem to have been especially eventful. Of most interest is Pym's unusual sensibili-

Gail Pool has written for Columbia Journalism Review, The Massachusetts Review, The Kenyon Review, The Christian Science Monitor *and other publications.*

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ty, which created the peculiar world of her fiction and which we can follow through this selective record.

A Very Private Eye reveals that when Pym was quite young she had already mapped out the terrain she and her fictional characters would inhabit. It is striking that early on she assumed the role of spinster, a role which her fiction explored in depth. While at Oxford, she fell in love with Henry Stanley Harvey, who remained a lifelong friend and to whom many of the letters in this volume are addressed. When Harvey married Elsie Godenhjelm in 1937, Pym wrote jokey but rather weird letters to him and "darling sister Elsie" in which she refers to herself, often in the third person, as "this poor old spinster." Pym was then 24. Even in her first novel, *Some Tame Gazelle*, begun when she was only 21 and based largely on people she knew at Oxford, Pym figures as a spinster of 50, living with her sister, participating in village affairs and still nurturing a flame for her first love (Henry), now the archdeacon and married to someone else.

Of course, at this early stage, Pym's spinster persona is partly humorous. *Some Tame Gazelle* and her letters to Henry and Elsie are meant to be satirical, and her Oxford diaries show Pym is aware of the social comedy she creates in seeking Henry out, arranging to be at certain places at certain times so she will "happen" to meet him, much as her heroines will do in the novels. But the spinster image is not treated with such humor in the war journals, as Pym, 30 and involved in a series of messy attachments, finds the role becoming reality. In 1943, while recovering from a serious affair, she writes, "Yes, you will be alive, it will not be the same, nothing will be quite as good, there will be no intense joy but small compensations, spinsterish delights."

Why Pym, a dynamic and apparently popular young woman, should have assumed the role of spinster so early is somewhat puzzling. But, in a sense, the role provided her with her life's work. She explored the position and the point of view of the single woman, and even when she allowed her heroines to marry, she lavished most of her attention on their unmarried state.

After the war, Pym's diaries become working notebooks filled with tiny details and bits of observation, as one would expect from a novelist whose work was characterized by—and criticized for—its emphasis on trivia.

"What is wrong with being obsessed with trivia?" Pym wrote in 1970. "Some have criticised *The Sweet Dove* for this. What are the minds of my critics filled with? What *nobler* and more worthwhile things?" At the simplest level Pym felt, as she wrote in 1943, that "it adds to the pleasure of life to notice things," but her "obsession" went much deeper and was intrinsic to her world view. Ordinary people living ordinary lives—her main fictional interest—*were* obsessed with trivia, Pym believed, organizing their lives, as Mildred Lathbury remarks in *Excellent Women*, around "the small unpleasantnesses rather than the great tragedies; the little useless longings rather than the great renunciations and dramatic love affairs of history or fiction." Life, in both its pleasant and its unpleasant aspects, is largely a matter of detail for Pym's characters. Her heroines aren't entirely satisfied with living at this level, but they come to terms with it.

This was much the case with Pym herself, who delighted in ordinary life—"bounded by English literature and the Anglican Church and small pleasures like sewing and choosing dress material"—but wasn't satisfied without the "extraordinary," which for her meant writing. "I honestly don't believe I can be happy unless I am writing," she wrote in 1938. "It seems to be the only thing I really want to do." In 1940: "After supper I did some writing which quells my restlessness—*that* is how I must succeed." And in 1963 she wrote to Philip Larkin, who supported and encouraged her through her years of obscurity, "It ought to be enough for anybody to be the Assistant Editor of *Africa* [which she was], especially when the Editor is away lecturing for six months at Harvard, but I find it isn't quite."

Pym's journals of the 1960s and 1970s show her coming to terms with ordinariness, settling into village life with her divorced sister, Hilary, much as she had prophesied in *Some Tame Gazelle*. They also show her coming to terms with failing health: breast cancer in 1971, a mild stroke in 1974. And they show her taking literary success, when it finally came, in her stride, moving on, making notes for a new novel, not dwelling on regrets. "The main thing is to feel that I am now regarded as a novelist, a good feeling after all those years of 'This is well written, *but* . . .'"

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A Very Private Eye is a moving account. As in the novels, much of the emotion is off the page, and its impact may hit us only upon reflection. The volume has been edited with great care, with selections made for relevance and continuity, though I do wonder why there is so little about religion, which played such a large role in Pym's life. As the editors intended, the autobiography illuminates the fiction. It does so almost too well, forcing us to see the limitations of all happy endings. □

German, Czech and Jewish

GEORGE GIBIAN

THE NIGHTMARE OF REASON: A Life of Franz Kafka. *By Ernst Pawel. Farrar, Straus & Giroux. 466 pp. $25.50.*

The new biography of Franz Kafka by the German-born novelist and translator Ernst Pawel goes far beyond those previously available in English by giving us a great deal more detail on Kafka's education, the circumstances of his work as an official in the Workmen's Accident Insurance Institute and his fatal illness. Pawel concentrates not on the literary and philosophical aspects of Kafka's writings but on their social and ethnic background. He gives us a history of the German-speaking Jews of Prague going back to the eighteenth-century Hapsburg monarchs, and provides us with statistics about the German, Czech and Jewish segments of the population of Bohemia. He gives particularly impressive pictures of Kafka's tyrannical secondary school and supplies valuable accounts of the literary coffeehouse life of Prague, of the German theater and of the legal training and examination system of the Prague German University.

In his lifetime, Franz Kafka was an obscure author whose work was known only to a small literary circle within the German-speaking world. One of his books, *Meditations*, published in a press run of 800, sold less than half that number in a year. Andre's, the best German bookstore in Prague, sold only eleven copies. Kafka remarked that he knew who had bought ten of them (he had), but was very curious to know who might have purchased the eleventh.

In the sixty years since his death in 1924, however, Kafka's works have captured the world's attention and Kafka studies have become something of a literary industry. One inevitably looks to a biography to explain why and how this man created works which appeal so widely and deeply in our century.

Kafka's life, as presented in this book, is a series of contradictions. The normal, even the banal, exist side by side with the eccentric and the exceptional. One of the paradoxes is that while Kafka's works give expression to the deepest anxieties and insecurities of our century, the milieu of bourgeois Prague, his native town, which he called "the little mother with claws," was remarkably solid and safe. Prague had, in fact, enjoyed peace for half a century when Kafka was born. The collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in 1918 was followed by the establishment of the Czechoslovak Republic, which brought continued stability and further development to Prague, the capital of the new liberal democratic state. In short, Kafka passed his life insulated from the external cataclysms of our age.

The outward normality of some of Kafka's daily pursuits is suggested by a curious entry in his diary for one fateful day in 1914: "Germany declared war on Russia. Swimming pool in the afternoon." True, Kafka worked among middle-class German, Jewish and Czech clerks and bureaucrats and participated in the activities of Prague's solid German-Jewish bourgeoisie—he loved hiking, he rowed on the Vltava (Moldau), he took the customary vacations at the customary places. Yet he was hypersensitive, obsessed and deeply alienated from the interests and values of the class to which he outwardly belonged. Moreover, he was triply alienated as part of a multiple minority—a Jew within a German-speaking minority within a Czech minority within the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

If Pawel's biography does not point out many connections between Kafka's life and his writings, it does supply the materials from which the reader can construct his own hypotheses. But even so, the connections between Kafka's life and his work can never be simple or direct.

One striking pattern is that many incidents in Kafka's biography, at least as Pawel reports them, resemble the absurdities of his fiction. Here is Kafka's account of a visit to his new territory for the Workmen's Accident Insurance Institute:

> You have no idea how busy I am. In my four districts . . . people tumble off scaffolds and into machines as if they all were drunk, all planks tip over, all embankments collapse, all ladders slip, whatever gets put up comes down, whatever gets put down trips somebody up. And all those young girls in the china factories who constantly hurl themselves down whole flights of stairs with mountains of crockery give me a headache.

But the absurd was not only in the eye of the writer. Kafka noted on another occasion, "I, who wanted to cure my neurasthenia by gardening, had to find out that the [son of the nursery's owner] . . . poisoned himself two months ago in a fit of depression at the age of twenty-eight." We begin to realize that Kafka's parables and stories are composed of materials borrowed from his external world while the emotional charge comes out of the nightmarish "frozen sea" inside him.

Another strand of recurrences in Kafka's life is woven into the imagery with which he expressed his desperate search for fixedness, health and belonging. Describing the husband of one of his sisters, a gentile Czech, Kafka writes, "He lives among his people, he is cheerful and healthy," and is satisfied with himself or dissatisfied with others "rightfully, by the same right by which the tree stands in the ground." In a letter to his beloved Milena Jesenska, Kafka speaks of "the efforts of a human being in distress to sink roots into some maternal soil."

One is also struck by Kafka's lifelong passion for biography, confessional literature, memoirs, collections of letters, diaries and journals. His taste in stories ran to brief parables, the more simplified the narrative the better. It may come as a surprise to find that while Kafka read Nietzsche when he was 17, at 40 he liked to read fairy tales and the Czech Boy Scout magazine.

In the various facts that Pawel assembles, we begin to touch the places where external biographical data intertwine with the roots of literature. They

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remind us of Kafka's belief that life's essentials—guilt, incongruity, senselessness and panic—lurk within the trivial and the routine. Certainly the legalese forced upon him in his law school days at the German University and the language in which he filed his reports about accidents and safety precautions for the Workmen's Accident Insurance Institute are a clue to the superficially bland language of his literary work.

Pawel's biography is valuable for the richness of the social information through which it renders the texture of Kafka's life. But there are also some indications that Pawel's acquaintance with the Czech milieu is much slighter than his familiarity with the German and Jewish backgrounds. There are geographical inaccuracies. (The ski resort Spindlerov Mlyn was not near the Polish border in Kafka's days.) It is imprecise to pin the tag "paramilitary" on the Pan-Slavic gymnastic organization, Sokol. The biographer overlooks too many of the Czech influences on Kafka, who spoke and wrote Czech fairly fluently. There may well be strong links between Czech vernacular storytelling and Kafka's own turn of mind and literary imagery. Hasek's *Good Soldier Schweik*, Polacek's later Czech-Jewish novels and, in our own time, the Prague-suffused fiction of Milan Kundera (erotic, political, absurd) testify to the affinities between Franz Kafka and Czech culture.

Pawel's accomplishment lies in his ample illustration of how in Kafka's life, as in his works, neurosis and anxiety were grounded in normality and ordinariness. Kafka was steeped in a solid healthy community and at the same time deeply alienated, frustrated and paralyzed; that tension gives us the key both to the man and to the artist. □

MUSIC.

DAVID HAMILTON

Horizons '84

A contemporary music festival presenting a range of styles, media and generations under prestigious auspices is as unassailable as motherhood. The New York Philharmonic's Horizons '84 even improved on last year's version: more concerts, tighter scheduling; more works from abroad and more ambitious ones; a wider sampling of technical means and expressive aims. Inevitably, small-group works were often dwarfed by the size of Avery Fisher Hall (not always, though—the "open-air" sonorities of Elliott Carter's Brass Quintet resounded happily), but a three-concert segment of music made with the assistance of computers benefited from a superb audio installation and from the hall's notorious acoustics, which proved remarkably hospitable to "canned" sounds.

All this confirmed the orchestra management's commitment to Horizons and to the aspirations of the festival's artistic director, composer Jacob Druckman. There's a central problem, however: that commitment doesn't appear to be matched by the orchestra itself or by its music director, Zubin Mehta. Last season Mehta led one concert and part of an open rehearsal, and made shockingly little effort to conceal his boredom; this year he was down to just one work. (Granted, he was recovering from elbow surgery, but that didn't prevent him from conducting *Aida* in London several times, including on the eve of his Horizons appearance.) And Mehta's obvious lack of interest surely encourages a comparable attitude in some of his players—although in fact the Philharmonic's playing these days is pretty consistently desultory, even in standard repertory.

Some of the festival conductors got acceptable results from the orchestra: Hans Werner Henze conducted his own lush, imaginative, somewhat overindulgent *Tristan* (recorded on Deutsche Grammophon 2530-834). Arthur Weisberg expertly led the premiere of George Crumb's static and pretty *A Haunted Landscape* (a recording is in preparation by New World). The highlight of Leonard Slatkin's program was Thea Musgrave's *Peripeteia*, proficient though less imaginative than her best work. Gilbert Amy's program included Betsy Jolas's finely detailed *Quatre Plages*, for an unconventionally disposed string ensemble. On Larry Newland's program, I was impressed by Harrison Birtwistle's "dramatic pastoral," *Down by the Greenwood Side*; the lack of staging obscured the thrust of Michael Nyman's libretto, but Birtwistle's hard-edged brutalization of Stravinsky's late style should be vividly effective in the theater. Mehta's contribution was a concert version of Oliver Knussen's opera after Maurice Sendak, *Where the Wild Things Are*, which,

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from the looks of the score, should be less unrelievedly raucous than it sounded in this performance. Absent Sendak's no doubt beguiling stage design, the overamplification of the solo voices (which didn't improve intelligibility), the orchestra's persistently strenuous playing and the lack of conductorial repose where appropriate (indeed necessary, given the music's prevalent exuberance) made even the surface of the piece hard to enjoy.

But only about a third of the works involved the Philharmonic itself. Perhaps because repertory choices were less circumscribed by constraints of performance difficulty, the music-with-computers segment included some of the most stimulating works. (Symptomatically, the orchestral duties in this segment were handled by the American Composers' Orchestra, conducted by Charles Wuorinen, not by the Philharmonic.) I liked not only the technical sophistication of John Chowning's *Turenas*, a computer-synthesized quadraphonic tape, but also its elegant timbral punning and consistently engaging musical activity—I was a little depressed to find it the oldest of the computer-based works. Wit seems to be one of the expressive categories most accessible to electronic sounds, and Paul Lansky's *As If* juxtaposed taped sounds and live string trio, making provocative comments on the crucial differences between recorded and performed music. Wuorinen's *Bamboula Squared*, a glittery juggernaut for orchestra and tape, demands a further hearing to absorb its full energy, textural complexity and invention. Roger Reynolds's *Transfigured Wind II* was riveting from the start because of the flute playing (live as well as tape-"transfigured") of Harvey Sollberger. With those two demanding scores (both world premieres) on its program, the Composers' Orchestra evidently hadn't enough time to give Milton Babbitt's *Correspondences*, for synthesizer tape and strings, the dynamic variety it needs.

Two over-programmed recitals under the rubric of "The New Virtuosity" brought Lincoln Center audiences a spectrum of "downtown" performers. I heard only the first of them, in which the comic satiric performances, such as trombonist Stuart Dempster's military tour de force in Robert Erickson's *General Speech* and Jon Deak's trashing of Hermann Hesse in his own *Readings from "Steppenwolf,"* were more rewarding than the extraordinary control of singer-composer Diamanda Galas, whose music manages to be at once utterly vapid and barbarously intense. (Would she be even spookier, I wondered, if her facial expressions were not masked by a battery of microphones—or is that featureless military-dictator image precisely what she wants?) While some of the so-called minimalists may be reinventing, if at a snail's pace, a usable musical language, other kinds of "performance art" seem to be reinventing vaudeville, though without the latter's sense of proportion.

Last year's festival, tendentiously subtitled "Since 1968, A New Romanticism?" ran the risk of being reviewed more for its ideology than for its content. This year's subtitle, "The New Romanticism—A Broader View," though more assertive, somehow didn't ask to be taken as seriously. If the music played in 1983 was already so stylistically diverse as to make the idea of an overriding "neo-Romantic" trend problematic, 1984's wider repertory made the slogan seem, more than ever, a media hype rather than serious artistic doctrine or critical perception. Did the subtitle bring in an audience that would otherwise have shunned a contemporary-music festival? I doubt it; most of the walkouts seemed the result of boredom, not indignation, and most of the audiences waxed enthusiastic over a wide range of material, some of it fairly meaty stuff.

It would be just as easy to castigate the festival's numerous dull stretches as to celebrate its achievements—most new-music festivals are like that. In New York City, fortunately, the vitality of the small-ensemble scene virtually guarantees that nonorchestral programs assembled with taste and sufficient funds will be fairly rewarding. The long-range problem that Horizons spotlights isn't that of programming a festival but of keeping an orchestra in touch with the world—and that problem will not be solved by segregating in a June ghetto most of the contemporary music it plays. The Philharmonic musicians may not want to believe it, but the stimulation of new challenges, both technical and expressive, on a weekly basis might be just what they need to pull their playing of standard repertory out of its present torpor. Given the context of an orchestra so stimulated, future Horizons festivals could become a much more valuable contribution than they are now. □

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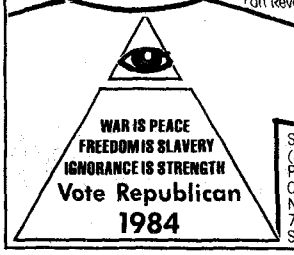

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POSITIONS AVAILABLE

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ORGANIZER, National Moratorium on Prison Construction, Unitarian Universalist Service Committee, San Francisco. Spanish-speaking preferred. $17,500—$18,500. Starts October. Send resume, cover letter by 9/1 to NMPC, 309 Pennsylvania Avenue S.E., Washington, DC 20003.

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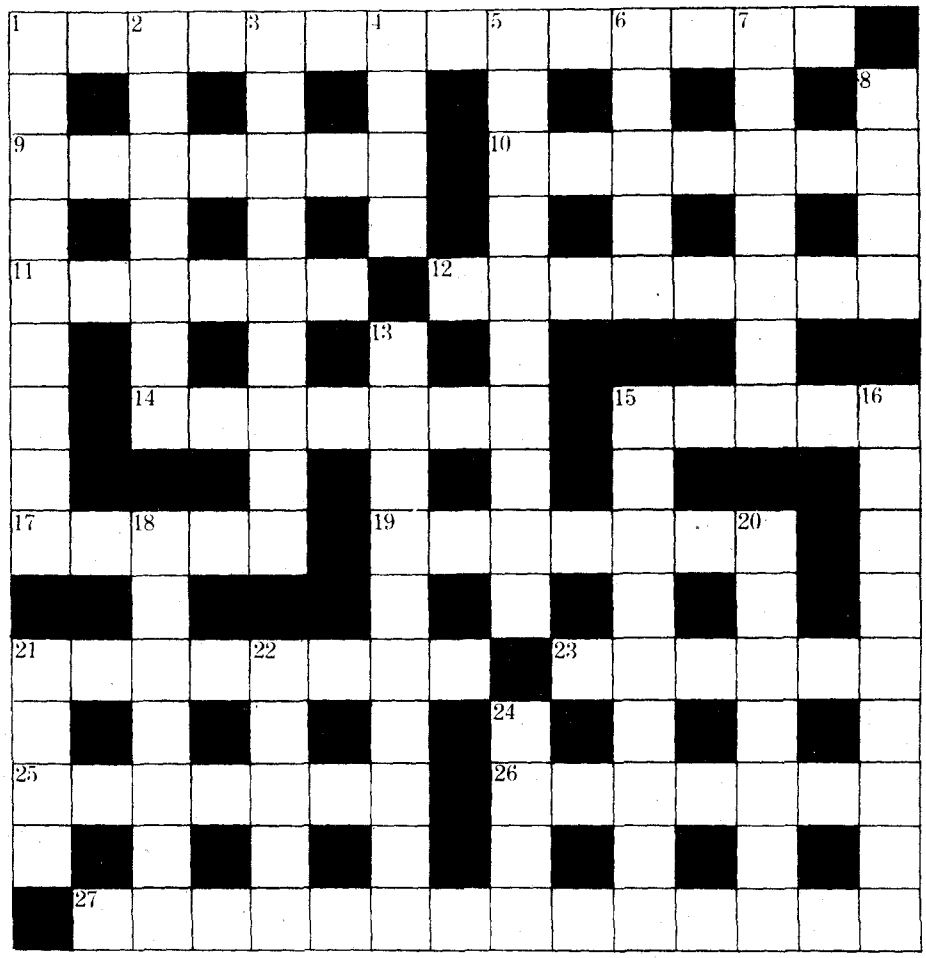
Crossword Puzzle No. 2018

FRANK W. LEWIS



ACROSS

1 Choose what used to be essential for light reading matter—for light reading. (8,6)
9 Found in a copper mine sometimes, they turn white in winter. (7)
10 Returns sick, with one friend getting volcanic ash from it. (7)
11 Struggle to make it first, possibly, but to the point. (6)
12 Beginning rather sour in 8. (8)
14 In critical or icy conditions, heat is so described. (7)
15 Beginning with B, all the letters are standard fare in Italy. (5)
17 One doesn't like to change them while traveling—one gets exhausted this way! (5)
19 Could be the head cleaner! (7)
21 Repudiates, it is said wrongly, promises. (8)
23 Born it would seem in England. (6)
25 Danced in the old-fashioned way but fell over one's feet. (7)
26 Greek lower regions 67½ degrees from it. (7)
27 Looking for an opening? Just looking! (6-8)

DOWN

1 The gas pipe is broken and without a thing to improve the fire! (4,5)
2 Material making up an eccentric mechanism with most of the building material. (7)
3 Unexpected good fortune, but the cradle won't rock if it does. (9)
4 What's the point in breaking cups this way? (4)
5 One might have to run to get to the office—since one almost always has a party. (10)
6 It sounds like a Cockney version of one of 1's (across) is proverbially paid. (5)
7 Long exchanges during court sessions may show what one does by getting better. (7)
8 See 20 down
13 Is the first mate's hitch over when one is made? (5,5)
15 Press cut? It's likely to be found around the top of the page. (5,4)
16 A sort of bran bagel isn't appreciated by everybody! (Do you like Wozzeck?) (5,4)
18 In the same business as 16. (Tell the name of one of his products!) (7)
20 and 8 Proving musical comedy is an integral part of America. (2,4,1,4)
21 Points made by those belonging to Dorothy, commonly. (4)
22 Flat, with 5 getting rather poorly paid. (5)
24 Sounds like a playwright lost his job a few years ago. (His hash was sure settled!) (4)

SEE LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION AT LEFT

PUZZLED?

No more cross words. Find out why "little skipper" is a "truant." Send for a free copy of Frank W. Lewis's Ground Rules to *The Nation*, 72 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10011.

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SOLUTION TO PUZZLE NO. 2017

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LOCAL ONE ALLIED GRAPHICS AMALGAMATED LITHOGRAPHERS OF AMERICA NEW YORK X-523

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STOP SMOKING IN ½ HOUR FLAT

Even Though You Really Don't Want To Quit!

That was me. A pigheaded, "didn't want to quit", die-hard smoker. Trapped in an aggravating love-affair—with cigarettes.

Openly, I cursed their choking grip on me. Inwardly, I was totally unwilling to do anything else but puff away. Your typical chain-smoker wildly raving about kicking the habit—*and not meaning one single word.*

It was a joke. Unfortunately, the laugh was on me. The grim warnings of the Surgeon General, the American Cancer Society, and my worried doctor all went in one ear and out the other. My tobacco addiction was like a runaway train. Completely out of control and destined for disaster. *Unstoppable!*

Me give up smoking? *Better ask for my right arm!*

Every so often, I would make a good old college try at quitting cold turkey. Before you could say "Jack Robinson", there I'd be. Frantically scrounging in the garbage for soggy butts. As usual, my good intentions went up in smoke. I was hooked—*again.*

Who was I kidding? Smoking was an undeniable necessity. Super-important to my daily life. How I enjoyed that first eye-opening drag in the morning—that satisfying end-of-the-meal lighting up —that nerve-settling inhalation when things got hectic. Me give up all these irreplaceable pleasures? Better ask for my right arm!

Cancer or no cancer, doctor or no doctor, I loved smoking much too much to ever stop. But one day, I discovered a secret that turned my burning passion into red-hot hate. A secret that set me free in just 30 minutes flat. *Not a single cigarette in 20 years!*

Freed me in 30 minutes! Not a cigarette in 20 years!

My smoking is past-history. Gone without hypnosis, behavior modification, pills, drugs, classroom courses, nail-biting, will-power or climbing the walls. Gone without such games as switching brands, chewing gum, fake candy, diary-keeping or saving dirty stubs in a messy jar.

Gone, too, without gaining an extra ounce. Matter of fact, my wife says that I even lost a couple of pounds. And I never felt better.

Running into an old buddy brought back memories of those "didn't want to quit" days. This 3-packs-a-dayer had tried everything but still couldn't stop. He begged me to outline the details of my remarkable secret.

That night, I wrote it out in plain, step-by-step language anyone could understand and mailed him a copy. After it did the trick for my buddy, he told some of his friends. Soon, I was hunted out by pleading strangers for the same "Stop Smoking Secret."

If you can lick a stamp, you can lick your cigarette habit just as I—and they —did. I know what it's like to have that compelling urge to light up. And I know what it's like to be able to smilingly pass it by without pangs of yearning.

What's more, I know that you can honestly and truly stop smoking for keeps in half an hour flat—even if it's the last thing in the world you'd rather do. All for a ten dollar bill.

© MCMLXXXIV Stop Smoking Co.,
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Simply send for my "Stop Smoking Secret" and read it. Yes, it's as easy as that. Just *read* it. I can't tell *how* it works. It just *does*. I guarantee it, with no strings attached.

Guaranteed to work— or your next pack's on me!

If you ever start smoking again after reading my secret—and I mean *ever*— you haven't lost any money. Merely return it for a full, every-penny-back refund plus $1 extra for a pack of cigarettes! *My treat!*

OK. I know exactly what's running through your mind. Even with my foolproof, risk-free, money-back plus guarantee, you're still looking for a way to get out of sending for my secret. You can't fool me. It's not the money. You'll pocket 100 times your investment in cigarette savings alone. The bottom line is this: You really don't want to quit—*and you'll do anything to avoid it.*

But just this once, listen to that little voice inside your head. Just this once give in to your common sense and give my secret a "look." Watch it automatically work for you in the only way that counts. Permanent no smoking! *Or your next pack's on me!*

Stop Smoking Co.
49 West 37th St., Dept.
New York, N.Y. 10018

SS-28

OK—I'll take a risk-free look. Here's my $10. Rush the "Stop Smoking Secret." If I ever start smoking again, I can return it for $11 refund. (That's $10 back plus $1 extra for a pack of cigarettes—*GUARANTEED*!)

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